

DUNLOP Still the standard by which all tyres are judged

RADICAL

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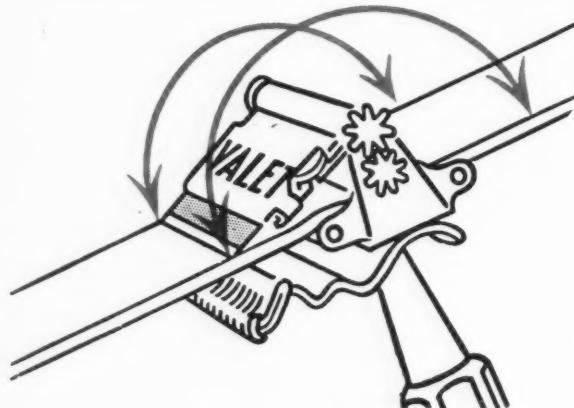
DETROIT



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text

Fit "Triplex" and be safe

The Valet razor strops itself and...



every morning gives
a perfect shave!

Valet Blades 2/6 per packet of 10 Including Purchase Tax

The Cup that Cheers
Drink delicious
Ovaltine
and
Note the Difference
in your Nerve-Strength
and Outlook

AT any time of the day a warm, comforting cup of 'Ovaltine' will do much to renew energy, strengthen the nerves and brighten your outlook. 'Ovaltine' is all concentrated nourishment derived from Nature's best foods—malt, milk and eggs.

'Ovaltine' also at bed-time will greatly help you to ensure a good night's sleep. Its easily digested nutriment will assist you to relax, soothe the tired body and quickly provide the conditions most favourable to peaceful, restorative sleep.

Because of its outstanding qualities 'Ovaltine' is the food beverage most widely used in Hospitals and Nursing Homes throughout the world.

Marcovitch
BLACK AND WHITE
cigarettes for Virginia smokers

Flat 15 for 2/3 - 25 for 3/9
100 for 15/-

Also BLACK AND WHITE
SMOKING MIXTURE
2 oz. tin 6/7

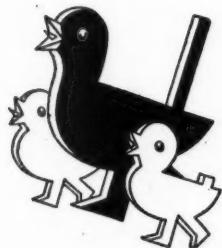
ISSUED BY GODFREY PHILLIPS LTD

Walk with
Liberty
and feel tireless

LIBERTY SHOES LTD., Leicester.

BIRD'S CUSTARD

*Best known -
best liked*



BIRD'S CUSTARD AND JELLIES



The word "Trubenised" is a registered Trade Mark, owned by Trubenised Ltd. It distinguishes fused semi-stiff articles made by leading manufacturers and processed according to the instructions and under the control of Trubenised Ltd.

ASK FOR "TRUBENISED" COLLARS, CUFFS AND ACCESSORIES

EXPERIENCE
COUNTS!

THAT IS WHY YOU
CAN RELY ON

*Carr's of
Carlisle*
Manufacturers
of Biscuits

ESTABLISHED 1853

STILL THE LEADERS
FOR QUALITY

©C938



Sirdar Leaflet No. 1162.

Lady's Jumper-Cardigan in Sirdar Majestic Wool 3-ply (formerly known as Super Shetland Wool 3-ply), bust 40 inches. Leaflet price 3d. from Stores and Woolshops, or 4d. post free.

HARRAP BROS. (SIRDAR WOOLS) LIMITED,
BECTIVE MILLS, WAKEFIELD



For the present

Shortage of timber is stimulating the use of other materials and new methods in furniture manufacture. This dressing table and stool, which can be painted any two colours, are from the collection of well-designed furniture in metal, to be found at

HEAL'S

196 TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, W.1

Note these Facts

25
WORKING DAYS LOST BY
EACH MAN PER YEAR

21
WORKING DAYS LOST BY
EACH WOMAN PER YEAR

A recent medical test of an industrial group proved that rheumatism caused absenteeism among men sufferers at the rate of 25 working days per year, and among women sufferers at the rate of 21 working days per year. Rheumatic pain can be relieved safely and speedily by taking two tablets of 'Genasprin' in a little water—so can SLEEPLESSNESS, NEURITIS, TOOTHACHE, HEADACHE, COLDS AND 'FLU.

Supplies are limited but your chemist will see you get your share. Prices 1/5d. and 2/3d.

At any time
of strain or pain

'Genasprin'
sees you through!

The word 'Genasprin' is the registered trade mark of Genasprin Ltd., Loughborough, Leics.

VOTRIX

Why it is
wise
to say . . .

NOW LET'S HAVE A
GIN AND VOTRIX



Closely guarded by the makers of all good Vermouth is the exact method of preparation—the proportions of the aromatic herbs, and the method of introducing them to the wine. Fortunate in the possession of an ancient recipe, well tried and proved by time, the makers of Votrix Vermouth obtain the final perfection of flavour by using delicious wine from selected Empire grapes and blending it with aromatic herbs in the old and accepted traditional method. The result is public knowledge, yet because Votrix is prepared in England it is still available at a fair price.

VERMOUTH
SWEET OR DRY 9/3

Produced and bottled by
Vine Products Ltd., Kingston, Surrey

Fly with the Stars

to
SOUTH or CENTRAL AMERICA
and
THE WEST INDIES
BY STAR LINER

For full information regarding
PASSENGERS, FREIGHT AND MAIL,
Apply to Leading Agencies or to

BRITISH SOUTH AMERICAN AIRWAYS

19, GRAFTON STREET, LONDON, W.1.

Telephone : Regent 4141.

Telegrams : Airlines Telex, London.

HE SAYS
"AU REVOIR"
BUT HE MEANS
"GOODBYE"



Play Safe! use
COLGATE
DENTAL CREAM
Twice a day

1/3 Including Tax

When "boy meets girl" but somehow forgets to arrange another meeting, it is often because he finds her guilty of Oral Offence.

Scientific tests prove that in 7 cases out of 10 Colgate Dental Cream stops Oral Offence that originates in the mouth.



THE BEST FROM THE WEST

SYMONS[°] DEVON CYDER

The WISE Habit!

APPLE MILLS · TOTNES · DEVON
AND AT LONDON



For Ever Yours
BOWERSBURN
Notepaper

Your writing looks its best on Bowersburn.
Sold by all the best Stationers.

When we invented

AERTEX

...we couldn't foresee a world shortage of materials: we found that to make this unique cellular fabric, involved a highly complicated spinning process. So much so that until restrictions are lifted the real Aertex must remain in short supply.

CELLULAR CLOTHING CO LTD LONDON WI

PI

Safeguard Your Teeth!



With **KENT** Exclusive
BLENDED BRISTLES

- AVOID ABRASIVE ACTION.
- PREVENT INJURY TO ENAMEL AND GUMS.

KENT OF LONDON
Best British Brushes

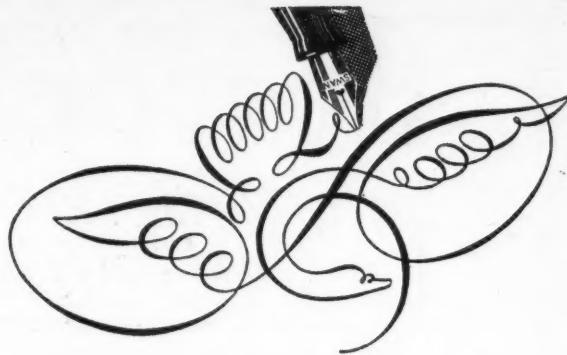


WEAR A

Windak
Weatherproof Jacket

WINDAK LTD., THE MILL, POYNTON.

308



*A few Swans have returned
both the leverless kind
And those with side levers
in shops you will find,
From twenty-one shillings,*
as smooth as of old,
To the writer, a pen worth
its weight in pure gold.*

* Models from 21/- to 50/-, purchase tax extra.

MABIE, TODD & CO. LTD. 41 PARK STREET, LONDON, W.1.
Showrooms & Service Depot: 110, New Bond Street, London, W.1.

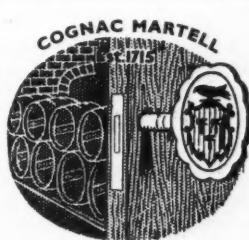
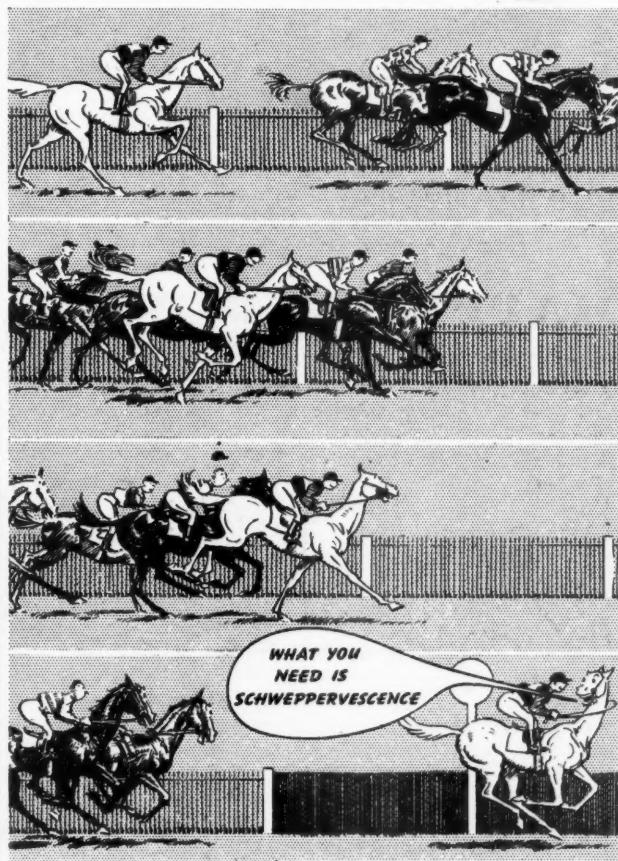
Weather-proofing steel



The Oxy-Acetylene flame brush loosens and removes surface scale and corrosion and thoroughly dries the steel, leaving a clean, dry and warm surface, which is ideal for the application of paint. Don't paint the rust, paint the metal—and paint it warm. That way the paint bonds better, goes farther, lasts two or three times as long. The flame brush can be used on site as easily as in the shop. Full details are given in Booklet Ref. T.I.B/11, gladly sent on request.



THE BRITISH OXYGEN CO. LTD.
6th floor, Grosvenor House, London W.1



TIME HAS UNLOCKED
THE DOOR TO YOUR
ENJOYMENT . . .

MARTELL
COGNAC
BRANDY

KEEPS YOU GOING

- LONG DRINKS ● RESTORATIVE
- LIQUEUR ● LIFE SAVER

THREE STAR CORDON BLEU
PER BOTTLE 37/- PER BOTTLE 47/-

Horrockses^{REG.}

*the Greatest Name in Cotton
and Textile Fabrics*

SHEETS · PILLOWCASES · TOWELS · FLANNELETTES · WINCETTES
DRESS GOODS · SHIRTINGS · FURNISHINGS · UTILITY FABRICS · ETC.

HORROCKSES, CREWDSON & CO. LTD., PRESTON, MANCHESTER, BOLTON, LONDON



By APPOINTMENT
TOILET SOAP MAKERS
TO H.M. THE KING

Bronnley

Makers of
FINE SOAPS
for Fifty Years

Bronnley
Beauty Soap
exemplifies
all that is
best in the
art of soap
making.



E. BRONNLEY & CO. LTD.
LONDON, W.1

The child that from early days experiences the use of
beautiful things, grows in appreciation of all that is best
and develops a natural good taste



CHRISTENING GIFTS

TO BE SEEN AT MAPPIN AND WEBB'S THREE LONDON HOUSES

MAPPIN AND WEBB

LONDON SHOWROOMS
2 QUEEN VICTORIA ST., E.C.4 156-162 OXFORD ST., W.1 172 REGENT ST., W.1
MANUFACTORY: THE ROYAL WORKS, SHEFFIELD
BUENOS AIRES RIO DE JANEIRO JOHANNESBURG BOMBAY PARIS BIARRITZ



by Appointment
Table Salt Manufacturers

Cerebos

Salt of quality

KNIT
WITH RELISH!



IT'S a plain fact—not a yarn—that Yorkshire Relish is a pearl of a taste-maker. Two kinds—Thick and Thin. They're the source of good taste. With them you can serve ordinary meals in new taste guise.

A NEW
TASTE IDEA
Try serving Bacon
and Scrambled Egg
(dried) on toast with a
topping of Yorkshire
Relish—Thick.

Yorkshire
Relish

Made by
Goodall, Backhouse & Co. Ltd., Leeds
Makers of famous sauces for 80 years

(46)

In Perfect
Taste

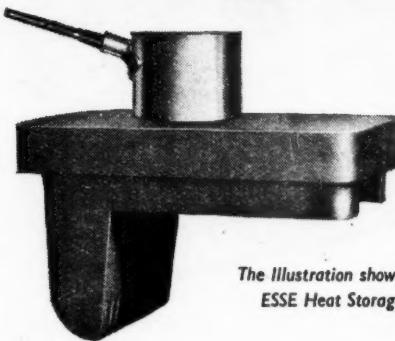
"THREE
COOKS"
Soups

EIGHT DELICIOUS VARIETIES

Three Cooks Ltd.,
26, Kings Road, Reading
Telephone: Reading 3245



The ESSE Heat Storage Hotplate



THIS IS
THE MEANING OF
HEAT STORAGE
COOKING

The illustration shows the massive
ESSE Heat Storage Hotplate

The extended tongue is in contact with the small, continuously-burning fire, directing and storing heat within the massive hotplate body. The ESSE Heat Storage Cooker itself, and the hotplate when not in use, is sealed by thick insulation. Thus fuel bills are cut, and the cooker is ready for instant use 24 hours a day. Fuel: anthracite, Phurnacite, or coke.

ESSE HEAT STORAGE COOKERS

THE ESSE COOKER CO. (Props.: SMITH & WELLSTOOD, LTD. EST. 1854)
Head Office and Works: Dens Iron Works, ARBOATH.
BONNYBRIDGE SCOTLAND London Showrooms and Advisory Dept.:
46 DAVIES STREET, W.1
See the Esse Exhibits at the B.I.F. Birmingham, 5th to 16th May.

"That cuts like a SHANKS MOWER"

You can't mistake the quiet, easy-cutting Shanks Mower. Yes, it's the new Shanks Silver Comet, the greatest value in roller-mowers. They're still hard to get, but if you place an order with your Ironmonger you'll be sure of attention in fair turn."

ALEXANDER SHANKS & SON LTD.,
Dens Iron Works, ARBOATH.

LONDON OFFICE:
66 VICTORIA STREET, S.W.1.



TRADE MARK

SEAGERS

SEAGERS
SPECIAL LONDON DRY GIN
SEAGER EVANS & CO LTD THE DISTILLERS LTD ENGLAND

GIN

MAXIMUM RETAIL PRICE
25/- per bottle.



At first, the idea of flying is liable to make a chap change his mind about being an engine-driver. Going aboard at Poole was fun, so was the take-off, but once you're calmly set on course for Sydney—well, it would be more exciting to drive an engine, with all the signals and points and the other expresses. Tell you what! If they'll let you drive, go by train. Every other time, go by flying boat. How's that?

And who wouldn't go by flying boat whenever possible? There's all the luxury of an ocean-liner in the spacious cabins, cocktail bar, dining saloon. There are two decks, and room to walk about. Life in a Short flying boat is just like a pleasure cruise—you're sorry you got to your destination so quickly.

This year, next year—some time it will be your turn to travel. Enquire from your travel agent, then, the routes served by Short flying boats. At present they include U.K. to Africa, India, China, Australia, and New Zealand, as well as services in South America.

It's fun to fly by flying boat!

Shorts

THE BUILDERS OF FLYING BOATS

Short Bros. (Rochester & Bedford) Ltd., Rochester



*A good mixer
in any company!*



Beautiful and distinctive... in gleaming chromium with red, blue, green or black relief. Price, complete, 74/9. Leaflet on request to:—

SPARKLETS LTD., LONDON, N.18

THE NEW
Streamline
SPARKLET



BY APPOINTMENT
MOTOR MOWER MANUFACTURERS
CHARLES H. PUGH, LTD.

ATCO SERVICE

Although the mowing season is in full swing it is still possible for Atco Owners to have their machines serviced. Special arrangements can be made with the Manager of your Atco Depot to have the work done expeditiously so as not to interrupt unduly your mowing programme. Please write or 'phone him now.

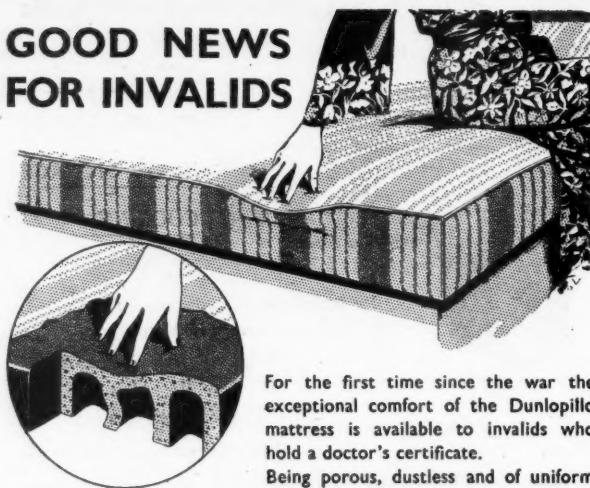
CHARLES H. PUGH LTD.
Whitworth Works, Birmingham, 9

**THERE ARE SIX
FOUR SQUARE
TOBACCOS
-EACH A BALANCED BLEND
OF VINTAGE LEAF**

The tobacco illustrated is Four Square Ripe Brown — a balanced blend of empire-grown Virginia tobaccos, specially processed to a rich, dark colour and ready rubbed for the pipe. Ask for 'Four Square Brown.'



GOOD NEWS FOR INVALIDS



For the first time since the war the exceptional comfort of the Dunlopillo mattress is available to invalids who hold a doctor's certificate.

Being porous, dustless and of uniform softness, it combines complete relaxation with perfect hygiene. Order through your furnisher. Supplies limited, orders in rotation.

DUNLOPILLO LATEX FOAM MATTRESSES

DUNLOP RUBBER CO., LTD., (Dunlopillo Div.) RICE LANE, WALTON, LIVERPOOL, 9
1, ALBANY STREET, N.W.1. Telephone: EUSTON 3434.

46/DP/6A

Current Austins comprise 8, 10,
12 and 16 h.p. de-luxe, 4-door,
4-cylinder sliding head saloons,
priced from £285 to £525. Also
the '110' Sheerline and '120'
Princess 6-cylinder saloons,
priced at £1,000 and £1,500 re-
spectively. All the above prices
are subject to Purchase Tax.

*more
and
more
people
are
saying...*

AUSTIN

-you can depend on it!

THE AUSTIN MOTOR CO LTD • LONGBRIDGE • BIRMINGHAM



PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXII No. 5543

April 2 1947

Charivaria

"NOTHING is too good for the housewife," says the Prime Minister. Is it not kind of him, then, to let her have it?

• •

A naturalist suggests that migratory birds are able to communicate with each other by a form of telepathy. Early cuckoos are already reporting back that they have seen their first newspaper correspondent.



• •

"DIED ON WAY TO FUNERAL."
Local paper.

Cutting it rather fine?

• •

Thieves who entered a London club are said to have left without a trace. They might at least have signed the Visitors' Book.

• •

Mobile teams of the Blood Transfusion Service are now visiting centres of population and calling upon offices, etc., to collect blood on the spot during business hours. Tax collectors are said to be keenly interested.

• •

A man living in the Thames Valley claims that he caught two fish, "absolute whoppers," in his front hall during the floods. He thinks they came in with the morning paper.

• •

Members of Whitehall staffs recently ate their lunches in the sun on the Thames Embankment. We understand, however, that it is still rather chilly in the Air Ministry roof-garden.

• •

"The boxing referee has the best view and is thus in a position to make his decisions, which should be undisputed," says a sporting writer. One advantage he has over the cricket umpire is that he isn't expected to hold the contestants' clothing.

The Moscow talks, says an observer, are not the final stage in the peace settlement. Still, they will mark another millstone.

• •

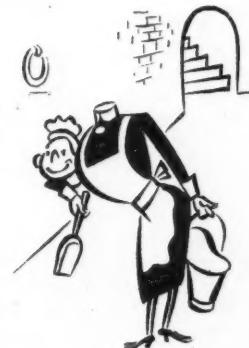
A correspondent says his telephone rang continuously all one afternoon. Milder weather had apparently thawed out a lot of wrong numbers.

• •

Many constituents have written to their M.P.s to protest against the restrictions on greyhound racing. They all point out that the labourer is worthy of his hare.

• •

"Most castles in England are haunted," says a writer. Although not necessarily by the National Coal Board.



Public Spirit

"Mr. C——, who announced his retirement from the Council after 22 years' membership, said that the people, harassed by taxation and rising prices, deserved a little relief." — *Cumberland News.*

• •

We hear of a laundry-girl who got into trouble for black-legging during a labour dispute. Apparently she ironed while the strike was hot.

When the Lights are Low.

"Mr. Liam O Laoghaire, producer at the Abbey Theatre, presided at the inter-debate by St. James's Gate and the Technical Students' Literary and Debating Societies when the motion 'That the Advent of the Cinema into Our Liver is to be Deplored' was debated and defeated by two votes."

Dublin paper.

• •

We understand that the Minister of Transport has dropped a hint to artists not to make seaside posters too alluring this year owing to the restricted service of holiday trains.



Confectionery at the Cross Roads

A Leading Article

MANUFACTURERS have nothing to fear,
Nor have the retail shops,
From the Royal Commission set up by the
Government
To inquire into Peppermint Drops.
Charges have been made against the concoctors
And sellers of this popular sweet
Of corrupting the taste and the palate of the public
By putting in too much heat.
The peppermint makers of Great Britain
Welcome this thorough investigation
Into a matter that vitally concerns
The health and well-being of the nation.
Peppermints are the Palladium of our confectionery,
And the people would be thunderstruck
If they found there was any deleterious substance
In the sweets they suck.
If the charges are properly grounded
Then let them be proved:

If not, let the tongue of malice be confounded
And the stigma on bullseyes removed.
Let liberty reign over England
Infringed by no menace nor trick,
But when liberty degenerates into licence
The people are sick.

The names of the members of the Commission
Inspire us with confident hope
That they will examine innumerable witnesses
Inside and outside the scope
Of the terms of reference of their inquiries,
And everyone that they call
Will give them most interesting and ingenious answers
That will tell them nothing at all.
The Royal Commission on Peppermint
Will report its findings no doubt
When the public has long ago forgotten
What all this fuss was about.

EVOE.

Fiction for Posterity

ANOTHER thing, I regret to say, that I have learned about writing is that a novelist should sit down quietly every six months or so and do a bit of mental stocktaking. You know the idea—you look facts in the face, see yourselves as others see you (though the wrong way round unless you use *two* mirrors), get wise to yourself and draft a sort of reconciliation statement, as the accountants say, between the world's estimate of your true worth and your own. The chief objects of such an inquiry are to discover whether your work will survive you, and if so by how much; whether the stuff you are writing should be considered purely ephemeral or potentially classical; and whether immediate claims for higher fees and larger publishers' advances on royalties would stand any chance of approval.

The next time you hold a seance of this kind I shall be pleased to help you with the interpretation of your accounts.

Let us suppose that your examination exposes a deficit, a deficiency of staying-power in your work. What can be done about it? Well, there are two possible lines of action. You could take steps to improve your writing—find something important to say and

an entirely new way of saying it—or you could study the old masters and take a leaf or two out of their books. I strongly recommend the latter course as the easier and more efficacious.

When I say that you should study the old masters I do not mean their style and matter: I mean their publicity. And when I say that you should take a leaf or two out of their books I am not suggesting the old dodge of quoting *in extenso*: I mean, borrow their business technique. Have you a flair for public relations? Are you as well equipped as the Victorians to meet the challenge of generations of readers yet unborn? To take one specific instance—have you made arrangements for your private letters to be published posthumously in instalments? I doubt very much whether you've even written them. Have you? Well, for goodness' sake don't put it off any longer. Nothing is more horrifying for an author than to reach a well-earned retirement only to discover that his collected letters have still to be written. I am not saying that bills, receipts, invoices, etc., are no good and should be discarded, but that they do not make a really satisfactory book by themselves.

Some of our greatest novelists and

poets have suffered appallingly through neglect of this simple precaution—Carlyle, Mannering, Hazlitt, J. H. Jones, William Cawthray, Jun., De Minton and Elizabeth B. Browning among them. ". . . Advancing years (failing eyesight, gout, success or recognition) brought no reduction in his industry; he worked indefatigably right up to the end, completing, annotating and filing his correspondence with his numerous friends and revising the proofs of his autobiographies; he knew no rest . . ." Do you want that to be you? Get those letters written now and ensure a comfortable swan-song at seventy.

Have you taken care to insert suitable advertising material in your novels? Read Thomas Askey and you will see what I mean. Askey's fame to-day rests almost entirely on the fact that his name and book-titles appear with monotonous regularity in the advertisement columns of the newspapers. Everybody must have seen:

"There could not be a better sauce," said Trowbridge, "than Bothwell's Thick Steak No. 1."
Thomas Askey, "Wise and Wherefore."

"If you ask me for the name of my



THE PAW OF THE BEAR



"So you see that whereas it took four men twenty-four hours to dig a pit twelve feet by four feet by two feet deep, it has taken six men precisely nine hours to dig a pit six feet by three feet by three feet deep. Are you satisfied now?"

boot-polish I can only say that it comes in a little green tin labelled Hunter and Collins."

Thomas Askey, "The Dream of Martha."

"No wonder you admire it," ejaculated Miss Binding. "This is genuine Cabstand Curly Cut."

Thomas Askey, "Misdemeanours of Millicent."

Altogether there are some two hundred and fifty suitable ad. lines in Askey and twenty-five of them are still in daily use. Ainsworth was another clever publicist. It is not generally known that the author of *Old St. Paul's* (Ainsworth) employed the services of one of the best market research specialists of his time—a Mr. Watson Watson of Ludgate Hill. This man furnished Ainsworth (the author of *The Tower of London*) with regular bulletins on the long-term prospects for all branded goods and these provided the commercial basis for those remarkably successful advertising tags with which the author of

Jack Sheppard (Ainsworth) sprinkled his pages. Dickens, Thackeray, Marryat, Bulwer Lytton and J. Whyte Melville (in that order) were also shrewd slogan-mongers.

Young writers are strongly advised to get in touch with some good agency before settling down to their interpolations, but for the benefit of those who cannot afford this step I append a short list of selected products. Every brand mentioned is considered "safe" for fifty or sixty years and is likely to be ignored by major novelists:—

Donkin's Light Ales
"A.1" Candy Bars
Smith and Landseer's cloches
"Hermit" (Brand) vapour rub
Winnower's Club Cut tobacco
Jenks's All-purpose stoves
Mason's grass seed.

Competition is brisk in this business, so make sure that your ads. are phrased to a turn. If in doubt, consult the Advertising Service Guild or any other good guild.

Turning to biographies, it is best to

aim at one every forty years up to your bi-centenary. Naturally, you will have to write them yourself, and you should make quite certain that they appear in the proper sequence by marking them clearly in black ink "Not to be opened until—." Some writers make arrangements with their friends whereby each party, with his successors and assigns, undertakes to publish the biographies of the other under suitable authors and titles at the appointed dates. But the safest practice is to fix up the pseudonyms yourself and keep the whole business within the family.

Shady? Yes, I suppose so. But this is literature, friend, not politics.

HOD.

○ ○
Verb. Sap.

"Nervy? Tired? Depressed? Webley Service Air Rife, Mark 2, 2 interchangeable barrels, 22 and 117; also Webley Ail Pistol, Mark 1; condition as new; seen between 5 and 6 p.m. any evening."

Advt. in Kent paper.

On Being About to be Burgled.

I HAVE always disliked burglars intensely," I declared. "Murder is often understandable, but lifting soup-spoons and clarinets in the middle of the night is a clammy act and vastly inconsiderate. My own inclination now is to put down man-traps and arrange for showers of boiling oil, but in these matters the law appears to have been designed solely for the convenience of the malefactor."

"Aren't you dramatizing the position?" demanded my Chiefs of Staff, a sceptical body.

"I beg you not to madden me," I said. "On Thursday Lady Pennywhistle's sparklers and the baronet's loose cash went for six. On Friday a neat hole was bored in the Hopstede's kitchen window through which most of their silver and a Sévres service were miraculously withdrawn. Last night the Pargiters lost a gold watch, a Richard Wilson and a great deal of valuable sleep. Draw a line through these three houses and tell me who gets the next in the stick."

"Looks like us," they admitted.

"Of course," I said, "nothing in a law which could only have been drawn up and passed by a unanimous committee of farsighted burglars can prevent my taking my stout ash stick to bed with me, the sharp spike of which I shall be happy to drive into any hovering torso I may awake to. Nor can it stop me placing two empty beer-bottles on my bedside table, one to be used as a projectile, the other in the manner of a Swedish club."

"We know you will sell your moth-collection dearly," replied the Chiefs of Staff, not without a hint of malice, "but it would be far better if these burglars never got in. If they came and just went away. This jungle ferocity of yours," they went on, "gets us nowhere. It blinds you to the importance of the psychological approach. You forget the burglar is a very frightened man. He is probably an even more frightened man than—"

"Do you want me to dress up in a winding-sheet and bray at them from the battlements?"

"One method which promises well would be to pin outside each window a carbon copy of a list of everything worth taking in the house, and their whereabouts. They would all be in your bedroom. It would be clearly indicated on a plan."

"I don't like the sound of that at all," I objected.

"Nor would the burglars. All their instincts would tell them to stay outside."

"I am not at all sure that burglars have instincts," I said. "They have very big, quiet feet and they eat a lot of fish to make them think quickly. That much we know, but I'm hanged if I gamble on their having instincts."

"Suppose we put up a notice to all whom it may concern apologizing for the shabby way we live and explaining that our only remaining piece is the silver-mounted rhinoceros-gun given to our great-grandfather by the Begum of Groggipore. We would urge great caution in moving about the house as no one knows how to unload the gun, which has a hair-trigger and no safety-catch."

"You would add it was in my bedroom, of course?"



"Certainly not. In one of ours. We could toss for it. You have the beer bottles and the spike."

"If we are going to put up a notice," I said, "it would be far more cunning to say something like:

'ALL OUR FAR-FAMED VALUABLES ARE IN THE BANK, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF MY GOLD MEDAL FOR THE WORLD HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP, MY SILVER HERCULES WON AT THE INTERNATIONAL WRESTLING CONTEST AT AMSTERDAM (THE YEAR I TORE AN EAR OFF BINGO THE TURK), AND MY GOLD-HANDED TARGET PISTOL, FIRST PRIZE IN THE INTER-SERVICES REVOLVER SNAP-SHOOTING COMPETITION.'

There might be a certain defensive magic in those words."

"There might," they agreed. "The weakness in all these devices lies in the fact that they do not operate until, in the dead of night, our burglars are actually gnashing on the threshold. Perhaps it would be wiser to keep them still further at bay."

"If you have in mind an electric stockade I feel sure Mr. Shinwell——"

"How about a sign at the gate with: 'WOLF DOGS TRAINED AND FOR SALE Caution! Every effort is taken to keep the animals indoors, but visitors are urgently requested to be very careful, especially at night'?"

"What should we say in the daytime to wolf-dog collectors with cheque-books?"

"Oh, five hundred guineas."

"I suppose we could dig elephant-traps all round the house, and lasso the catch at our leisure after breakfast."

"The paper-boy and the postman would pretty soon tire of it."

"The trouble with burglars is," I said, "you never know."

At this the telephone rang, as I might have guessed it would.

"That was the police," I explained. "The car has been found in a little-known corner of Kirkcudbrightshire. No petrol. No oil. No big ends."

"The trouble with burglars—they began.

"Burglars," I said savagely, "should all be put to work five years in the mines, as a prelude to learning the whole of Ella Wheeler Wilcox by heart."

• •

"American Electric Blanket for sale, new. Owner leaving. Rosepink colour."

Advt. in Sunday paper.

Forgot to switch it off?

At the Pictures

POTTED DICKENS

PROBABLY almost everything that is wrong with the film of *Nicholas Nickleby* (Director: CAVALCANTI) can be traced to the crowding into it of too many of the novel's characters and too much of its plot. These twisted and melodramatic Dickensian plots, riddled with coincidence and looped up on every side with hidden relationships, simply will not bear quick telling: the more people and incidents are crammed in, the more the whole thing seems like a burlesque. They need slow assimilation if one is even to begin to take them seriously. Apart from taking them seriously, one cannot be particularly impressed by the revelation that X is really the son or brother or whatever it is of Y, if one has had very little time to get to know either X or Y; and as for the fantastic and "rich" characters, a mere glimpse of them is no good at all. The best things here are those "rich" characters who are important enough to the main narrative to be able to reinforce and sustain their original impression—notably the *Squeers* of ALFRED DRAYTON who is a delight in a part and appearance startlingly unlike anything he has ever had before. The gusto of STANLEY HOLLOWAY as *Crummles* (though there is hardly enough of him) also is stimulating. Many of the other personages, if not innocuously colourless, make one flashing appearance with their bag of tricks and then drop out of sight. Though the film as a whole does not approach the excellence of *Great Expectations*, it is quite a sound and entertaining piece.

Considering how obviously it is based on the formulas and situations that proved so successful in *Going My Way*, surprisingly much of *Welcome Stranger* (Director: ELLIOTT NUGENT) is enjoyable. I mean that while I was continually aware of the calculatingly commercial motives that must have dictated the choice of many scenes as well as the whole pattern of the picture, I couldn't help taking pleasure in many of its details. I don't suggest that this is aesthetically a good film or one you "ought" to see, but I do say it is a perfectly good source of innocent (exceedingly innocent) amusement, and that the smooth and easy playing is attractive to watch.

One doesn't take the plot seriously: it is about as obvious and corny as anything could be, and the "dramatic

climax" is almost childishly simple-minded. What makes parts of the rest of the film pleasing is the airy skill with which the easy, superficial effects are put over. There is a country barn-dance scene here that, in a way, exemplifies the method of the whole picture: the plain old tumty-tumty tune has been tricked out with a little, not offensively noticeable,

particular film that if they'd picked it out of a hat. From this hat too—full of the characters, incidents and scenes suitable to a tough, half-lit, rain-swept Californian murder story—might have come most of the other things in the film, and even the shuffling of them does not seem to have been done with very great enthusiasm. There is too much brutality, too obviously put in

for the people who like that kind of thing; and the method of narration involves too much stern melodramatic commentary in the off-screen voice of HUMPHREY BOGART. Otherwise he has some amusing and exciting things to say and do, and the picture has its moments. One of the best is the opening sequence—deserted Sunday-morning streets, the intoning of a newsvendor, and a fugitive running between a car and a church.

The most interesting film of the fortnight is British, *Temptation Harbour* (Director: LANCE COMFORT); the fact that it is last on this page means nothing except that I was not able to see it until after I had written about the others. Without having read the story by GEORGES SIMENON on which it is based (I've read eight of the Simenon books published here and searched for the rest, but I haven't found the one containing *Newhaven-Dieppe*) I would say that the adapters have made a very good job of transferring the Simenon atmosphere to an English setting. This story of a signalman who saw a murder and found a suitcase containing five thousand pounds has been very well done, notably in the acting department—the direction is unobtrusively competent, but gives the impression of certain missed opportunities. ROBERT NEWTON is excellent as the basically decent, conscientious man tempted by a succession of accidents into crime, and MARGARET BARTON is strikingly good as his young daughter. One point I wasn't very happy about is the film convention of "spoken thoughts"—the player concerned looks out of the screen, reflecting, and we hear his voice murmur what is in his mind. This device is used here only for one character, the signalman. Whenever it turns up I think of Groucho Marx saying "Pardon me while I have a strange interlude."

R. M.



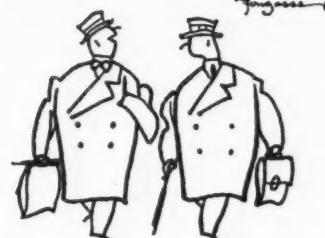
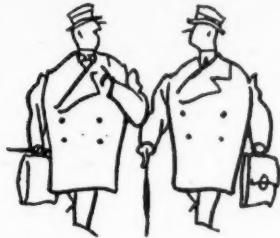
[Nicholas Nickleby]

WICKED UNCLE

Ralph Nickleby . SIR CEDRIC HARDWICKE

hesitation of rhythm that brightens it. BING CROSBY and BARRY FITZGERALD (the young smarty with the solid virtues, and the melted curmudgeon) go through their familiar paces acceptably as a pair of country doctors. Are they working their way through the professions? Next time, will it be the Law?

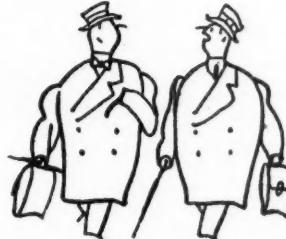
I don't see that the title *Dead Reckoning* (Director: JOHN CROMWELL) has any more connection with this



"Personally I cannot understand why people dislike queuing so much—

it's the only possible way to ensure that everyone's treated fairly and equally—

and it's the same for everybody, rich and poor alike; in fact I think we ought to be proud that all of us, whoever we are—



bave to toe the line and stand in a queue, just like everyone else.

You say you've never stood in one yet?—

Good heavens, man—neither have I!"

Ordeal by Poster

I HAVE made up my mind: I shall go straight in to see Mr. Dinwiddie, the managing director, and demand to be transferred to one of our branch offices. Not for another day—no, not for another hour—will I continue to work at a window exposed to the horrors of the cinema posters across the street.

Even as I write a billposter is pasting into position the north-west corner of a new poster. It shows a gigantic hand grasping an enormous club. Goodness knows what shocking scene will appear when the picture is complete. Perhaps it will show Miss Bacall taking a late cut at Mr. Bogart with the monstrous thing. Or Mr. Bogart repelling with a few deft strokes the laryngeal advances of Miss Bacall. Time will tell. All I know is that I am getting away from it all.

It hasn't always been like this. Indeed no. There was a time, way back in my early days with Dinwiddie's, when I could raise my eyes from my ledger and be pretty sure of seeing that nice Miss Pickford dimpling at me from behind a sun-bonnet. Sometimes

there were white-haired old mothers, stretching kindly arms to me across the street. Or cowboys—big, frank-faced chaps—stroking the velvety muzzles of their mustangs with neatly-gloved hands.

Something of the innate decency of these people seemed to communicate itself to me. I sang at my work. White-haired old office-cleaners could always count on me for a hand with the heavier furniture. Once, when I caught Mr. Dinwiddie peeking over my shoulder, I stroked his velvety muzzle with a pen-wiper. (Many's the laugh we've had about *that*, as you can well imagine!)

Then came the pre-war period and something clean and wholesome seemed to go from the hoarding opposite my window. A rougher type of cowboy crept in. The mustangs began to leer at me through half-closed eyes. Small-arms, hitherto confined to the holster, were now carried openly in the hand and, in extreme cases, even pointed at people. Tired business-men might be seen leaning across the bosom of the urgent West. The rot had set in.

To-day the last of the barriers is down. Razors are flashed in my face. Hypodermic syringes are buried to the hilt before my eyes. Schizophrenics mouth at me over Miss Bergman's shoulder. Dipsomania and the doping clamour for my attention. Even the dilated pupils of Lassie seem to hint that more than a little cocaine is finding its way into her condition powders.

My work is beginning to suffer. I keep my hat on at board meetings. I call Mr. Dinwiddie "Butch." I have contracted a nervous habit of extracting quite ordinary bits of postal information from the office-boy with the aid of a length of lead-piping.

I have just dared to look out of the window again. Perhaps I won't go and ask Mr. Dinwiddie for a transfer after all. The poster on the hoarding is now complete. The monstrous club has turned out to be nothing more dangerous than a baseball-bat. It is in the well-kept hands of someone uncommonly like Mr. Crosby. He is dressed as a bishop.

Perhaps the tide is turning.



"I've called to persuade you to insure your furniture against fire."

Dirge on the Passing of a Valued Watch

MOAN all ye clocks, and all ye watches moan!
Whatever chimes from steeple or from tower
To tell the world the hour,
Whatever sounds from mantelpiece and wall
Of wheezy grandsire and alarming bell,
Lament, and Ben's sonorous bronze intone
Its mighty clanging knell!
My watch, that was the rarest of you all,
Has left this planet for the Great Unknown.

No splendid watch was he,
Nor fair to view nor bought with princely fee;
No part was his in that superior throng
Whose smoother utterance and complacent smirk
Proclaim the knowledge "We are never wrong;
We chance, you see, to work";
He would but lift his little face to mine
With that dear look of trustful eagerness,
And hope, and brave endeavour,
As who should say "The time, sir, at a guess—
The time, good master, might be half-past nine."
And was it? Bless him, never.

Long he had languished, many times had quit
My orphaned pocket for the desperate aid
Of cleansing waters and the surgeon's blade,
But ever feebler grew each vital power,
Vaguer his grasp of things, less apposite
His comments on the hour.
At length the heart so long so deathly sick
Faltering, then stopped. I called on all my skill,
Begged, cursed, cajoled him, but I could not save;
One little tick he gave,
Such last fond message as one little tick
May whisper to another, then was still.

No more availed to wind him, wholly vain
The fevered shaking. Free, for ever free
From Time's bewilderments, that harassed brain
Tries now the problems of Eternity.

Ah, heavy loss! Well knew the Lower Third
My breathless entries, oft they hushed their noise
To catch the loved refrain, "Forgive me, boys;
It was my watch that erred."
Gone now the plea, and with it gone the ray
That steered my floundering way,
And half the nighted voyage still to run!
Sure any pilot star, however dim,
Sure even a pilot shooting-star like him
Were better use than none!
Uncertain heretofore, I now shall be
Fantastic: even as the tall gates slam
On the last pupil homing to his tea,
The last worn usher catching the last tram,
Then shall I come; or on the midmost night
Sudden appear, to startle the dim rows
Of ghosts a-riot in the room's pale light,
And harshly discompose
Their ghoulish glee with talk of Latin prose.

M. H. L.

More Culture

IN my last article on culture I left a good deal out, one of the most notable omissions being any reference to art exhibitions; so, without stopping even for a new paragraph, I shall begin by stating that to attend an art exhibition is to deal a blow for civilization, and that art exhibitors reward their publics by selling them little catalogues which can be left round the home for months without looking wistful. An art exhibition may be defined as an empty room full of pictures. It may be a huge exhibition like the Academy, thronged with crowds feeling hardly more self-conscious (by which I mean conscious of one another) than a crowd in a grocer's; or it may be just an upstairs room at an art dealer's, with only us there. People—that is, ordinary people—who find themselves alone at this sort of exhibition walk round it in an emotional jam. I don't mean quite alone, because an ordinary person finding absolutely no one else there would panic and escape by gazing worriedly round as if someone else had failed to turn up. But it is possible to walk quite slowly all by yourself round an exhibition containing no more than six other art-lovers, with the danger that someone paid by the art-shop could dart out and threaten you. It is this contingency, combined with the obvious necessity of looking keen, that confuses the emotions and sets the face in a shape that aches very slightly if not given a few seconds off now and then. People who take the sensible precaution of bringing or being brought by a friend know no such confusion. Their only trouble is if they have been brought, when they will have to try not to be stupid, and to remember that if they get excited because a landscape is near where they once stayed, or because a relation of theirs lives opposite the painter, they are being typical.

Two people cannot attend any exhibition together without some cross-talk over who pays for the catalogue—nothing much, just the usual business of insisting and, if they surprise themselves by succeeding, reminding themselves that now they can take it home. A catalogue

serves a double purpose: besides enabling the person holding it to read out the title and painter of the picture next on the list to the picture the other person is asking about, it helps the reader-out (usually the less artistic of the two) to feel useful. Quite right too, psychologists say. They compare reading out a catalogue with pushing the wheelbarrow to and from the weed-heap; it starts by being fun, but goes on longer. Psychologists say also that catalogues take people's minds off their feet, the effect of art exhibitions on feet being so well known as almost to make up for it. Many art exhibitions have little pieces of sculpture dotted about the room. These are nice because people can walk round them before they say anything; but here again the ignorant must watch out and not coo just because they see a baby owl. I will say one more thing about the ignorant before I finish with art exhibitions. It is that all this fuss about people saying they know what they like has a simple, human explanation. The ignorant can only say of a picture that they like it or not. The poor things are not being dogmatic, just trying to get it over quickly.

NOW for a note on films, with the cultural aspect of which it is impossible to deal without bringing in the word *montage*. Luckily it is possible to bring in the word *montage* without having to know what it means; otherwise the word would not have been nearly so bandied about in the days when film-making first became recognized as an art. I mean, it was recognized as an art when it made artistic films; not otherwise. This attitude has become modified of late, critics tending nowadays to see good in a bad film to show they are not being had by the rest of it. The effect is to have the public nodding to itself when it finds a cameo (as a good bit of short-term acting is called) or a memorable piece of photography (as a good bit of photography is called) or a brilliant sequence (this, as far as they can deduce, is just a good bit) or, if they are clever enough, some effective cutting. (I shall explain cutting later.) As nowadays you may get all this in a film which doesn't pretend to be anything more ambitious than a mammoth super-musical, there is not quite the old sharp division in films and audiences. But a really highbrow film still has the same effect on those who have missed it—a belief that it will turn up again somewhere. On those who have seen it the effect is also the same as ever. It sends them into a frenzy of recollected delight which no one who has not seen it can do anything about beyond seizing on the name of any actor they have seen in any other highbrow film and going into a counter-frenzy about that.

I promised to say something about cutting. Cutting means leaving out of the film what is not going in and sticking the remainder together. It is obviously a difficult job—sticking anything together is, and not many things we stick together in ordinary life curl and flap as we work—and if the public is not always specifically appreciative that is only because it does not know what the left-out bits are like, though it gets a notion from such moments as when the hero sits down at a saloon table and gets a mountainside over his face just as he is pushing his hat back. If ordinary filmgoers find the hat-pushing the most interesting part of all this, you must not blame them. They cannot help half-thinking it got in by accident.

L AST time I devoted some space to well-known literature; now I want to give some to a little-known sort, I mean little-known as literature though familiar as experience. I don't know how many of my readers remember those poems they wrote at school, because early poems make

for the subconscious immediately, especially the sort written actually in class, the idea being to get down as many rows of words as might be found rhymes for before the bell went. I bet, though, that most of my readers remember that they wrote at least one poem about spring in which, in a simple metre, they expressed pleasure at the situation. Poems written for school magazines are easier to remember because they were printed and drunk in afterwards. Sometimes they even turn up again, giving their author the same satisfaction as early photographs—the satisfaction of reflecting what a much better job they have made of themselves since. Most people wrote a lot more in early life than now. Statisticians say that the average person wrote (besides the spring poem in class and the autumn poem for the magazine) a serial based unscrupulously on one in the *Rainbow*, some sketches of animal life, a parody of Hiawatha, two lines that looked astonishingly like real poetry but got nowhere, and innumerable essays on such problems as procrastination being the thief of time, or all not being gold that glistens. Most people, I think, would agree that if only they had made carbon copies of all they wrote then it would not have been worth the trouble of getting the carbon paper the right way up.

THE only other branch of culture I have space for here is the sort of person who can take a book from a shelf and explain that it is a good or a bad piece of book-production. Look, they will cry, pointing at the title, the colour, the length and width, even the print inside. This never fails to impress the simple, especially if it was a book they had not minded about before. It even impresses the people who had already decided they didn't like the look of it but had never known why. There are also people who maintain stoutly—by which I mean rather harder than they perhaps believe—that it doesn't matter what a book looks like as long as it is worth reading; and it is an interesting fact that these people can be considered as cultured as the opposite sort, but only if they have made the grade in other directions.



"This wouldn't have happened if we'd done as I said and emigrated."



"... can't think WHY you keep 'arping on the possibility of another flood."

The Perfect Secretary

I HAVE to go to London; I don't know it very well.
I'd like to book a room if I could find a nice hotel.
I must ring up for a taxi—I hope the train's all right.
I must let the vicar know I can't play bridge to-night."
Her secretary answered, as efficient as could be,
"I'll arrange it, Mrs. Turnbull; you can leave it all to me."
And she did.

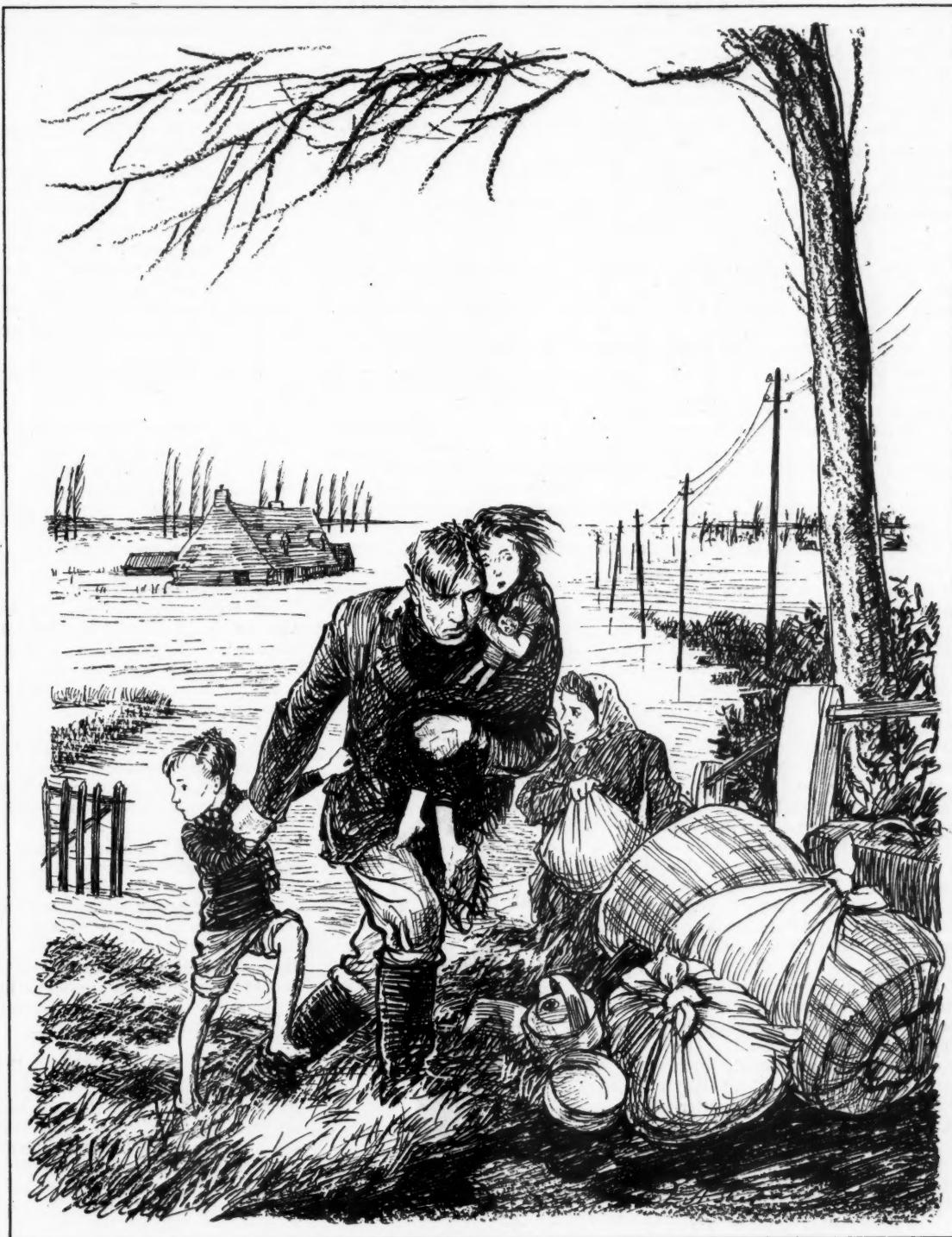
"We're very short of fuel; I must try to get some wood.
The garage door's been mended but it isn't any good.
I must get on with my knitting, and I ought to iron my dress.
I must see about the garden—it's in a dreadful mess."

Her secretary answered, while pouring out the tea,
"Don't worry, Mrs. Turnbull; you can leave it all to me."
And she did.

"I'm getting rather elderly; I'm feeling rather ill.
I must send for my solicitor; it's time I made a will.
I wish I had some relatives—there's not a single one,
And there's such a lot of money; whatever's to be done?"
Her secretary answered (a clever girl was she)
"It's quite simple, Mrs. Turnbull; you can leave it all
to me."

And she did!

M. H.



VICTIMS OF THE FLOOD

[Contributions now urgently needed for the relief of homeless families should be sent to "The Lord Mayor's National Flood Distress Fund, Mansion House, London E.C.4."]

MONDAY, March 24th.—

The Consolidated Fund Bill is a sort of legislative Pandora's Box, full of miseries or blessings, according to the side of the House on which the speaker sits. The Bill is a general financial measure, granting money for a wide range of Government purposes, and it is customary to make the debate as wide as the Bill itself. At least as wide.

So it was that a debate which began with a somewhat stilted and academic discussion on Imperial Preference, ended with consideration of the fate of five natives of the Gold Coast who had been condemned to death for a ritual murder.

It was a striking example of the way in which the House can switch its attention abruptly from issues affecting millions to the affairs of an individual.

There was something macabre about the sudden intervention in the debate of Mr. SIDNEY SILVERMAN, Mr. LESLIE HALE and Mr. QUINTIN HOGG on behalf of the condemned men. The intended execution of the men, who had been taken to the place of execution several times, only to be taken away again because some new process of law was being invoked on their behalf, had led a week or two ago to a stormy scene in which Mr. CHURCHILL had headed the attack.

As the hands of the clock neared midnight Mr. SILVERMAN caused a gasp from the crowded House — Mr. EDEN and other Opposition leaders had hurried in a moment before — when he announced that three of the five condemned had, a short time before, been hanged. Mr. CREECH JONES, the Colonial Secretary, looked uncomfortable. Other Ministers gazed at each other in apparent dismay.

Mr. SILVERMAN was going on to tell the story of the executions, and how the order of the court stopping the hangings had been received only when three of the men had already been (as he put it, bitterly) "judicially murdered," when Mr. Speaker intervened.

Mr. Speaker explained patiently that the Colonial Secretary was not responsible for the exercise of the Royal Prerogative of mercy on the Gold Coast, and that, even if he were, it was not open to question in the House of Commons. In any case, the whole matter was *sub judice*, since two of the men still lived.

The three Members argued with ingenuity, seeking to find some way

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done:

Monday, March 24th.—House of Commons : Two Aspects of Empire.

Tuesday, March 25th.—House of Commons : Cottages in the Country.

Wednesday, March 26th.—House of Commons : A Charge is Resented.

Thursday, March 27th.—House of Commons : Apology Accepted.

in which the case might be discussed in the House, but Mr. Speaker was firm in his ruling that no debate could be allowed. In vain Mr. SILVERMAN protested that the sovereign House of Commons could give orders to the Governor of the Gold Coast or to anyone else.

"Must we," he cried dramatically, "allow this to go on—and then debate the matter over their graves?"

Mr. Speaker called the next item on the agenda and the excited Members trooped out to talk over the strange case of the ju-ju ritual murders

in far-away Gold Coast. There was no mistaking the uneasy feeling in the House over an affair that had stirred deeply the considerable humanity of that very human assembly.

The debate on Imperial Preference was academic and learned, and both sides of the House delivered powerful orations on this complex subject. But it did not seem to lead anywhere.

Question-time produced some of those pithy sayings which your scribe delights to enshrine for the enlightenment (or thereabouts) of posterity. Such as:

"The Attorney-General always passes the buck to another Minister."—*Mr. Richard Stokes*.

"The Honourable Member has always been under a misapprehension."—*Mr. Strachey*, Food Minister (referring to Sir Waldron Smithers).

"Potatoes and other vegetables would inevitably disappear under the counter if price control were imposed."—*Mr. Strachey*.

There was one touch of brightness in all this. Mr. STRACHEY promised that he would soon fix the maximum price of . . . strawberries. A pensive, nostalgic look came into many an eye.

Mr. TOM WILLIAMS, the Minister of Agriculture, promised swift help for those who were suffering disaster as a result of the floods in the Fenlands and elsewhere. In doing so he coined this Whitehall euphemism for floods: "Watercourses have become seriously overcharged."

Mr. ATTLEE rounded off the day with an announcement that the Oliver—and Olive—Twists of the twentieth century, the orphaned and unwanted children, are to be placed under the direct care of the Home Office. The House cheered an announcement that should mean that these pathetic little orphans of the storm are in for a happier future.

TUESDAY, March 25th.—Rural housing was the subject for to-day's debate, and Mr. HUGH DALTON, Chancellor of the Exchequer, won hearty applause for a preliminary announcement that the Government was giving £1,000,000 to the fund opened by Sir BRACEWELL SMITH, Lord Mayor of London, to aid the victims of the floods in country areas.

Perhaps the most effective of many well-informed and moving speeches on rural housing came from Lady MEGAN LLOYD GEORGE, whose maiden speech (still remembered as a model) had



"WHEN I FIRST PUT THIS UNIFORM ON."

"Is the War Secretary aware that red is the historic colour of the British infantry?"—Gen. Sir George Jeffreys, who served in the Army for 41 years.

dealt with the same subject. Lady MEGAN spoke of the "slum villages" which nestled in Britain's beauty spots, and sharply reminded the House that the sort of place advertised as an "Artists' Paradise" might be a Residents' Hades.

The Government promised to do whatever was possible to improve rural housing, and the House let the matter rest there, for the present.

General Sir GEORGE JEFFREYS asked the Minister for War, at Question-time, why soldiers were not to have red coats. Mr. BELLENGER replied that red cost twice as much as blue—a statement that the Conservatives seemed to find full of political significance and cheered accordingly. When the Minister added that red was out of public favour, Conservative joy was unconfined. However, Mr. BELLENGER was able to assure Communist Mr. WILLIE GALLACHER that "M.I.5" had had nothing to do with the banning o' the red. Which seemed to relieve Mr. GALLACHER considerably.

WEDNESDAY, March 26th.—Mr. ATTLEE announced this afternoon the names of the Royal Commission which is to inquire into the newspaper and periodical Press and the news agencies. Sir DAVID Ross, member

of many inquiries and official committees, is to be chairman, and will have the co-operation of sixteen colleagues.

No sooner had the names and terms of reference been announced than Mr. WILL NALLY, rising from the Government benches, shocked the whole House by a suggestion that a newspaper was paying bribes to get information about secret Party meetings. Conservative Members at once pointed out that this was an allegation that M.P.s were *receiving* bribes, and the Speaker sharply told Mr. NALLY that he must withdraw the charge, which was "most improper."

Mr. NALLY offered a partial withdrawal, but there were more cries of protest, and the Speaker ordered him, still more sternly, to withdraw unreservedly. This, after a little hesitation, the offender did, but Mr. Speaker said this did not prevent the matter being raised again as a matter of possible breach of the privilege of the House.

With indignant glances at Mr. NALLY—by no means all of them from the Opposition side of the House—Members left the matter there for the moment.

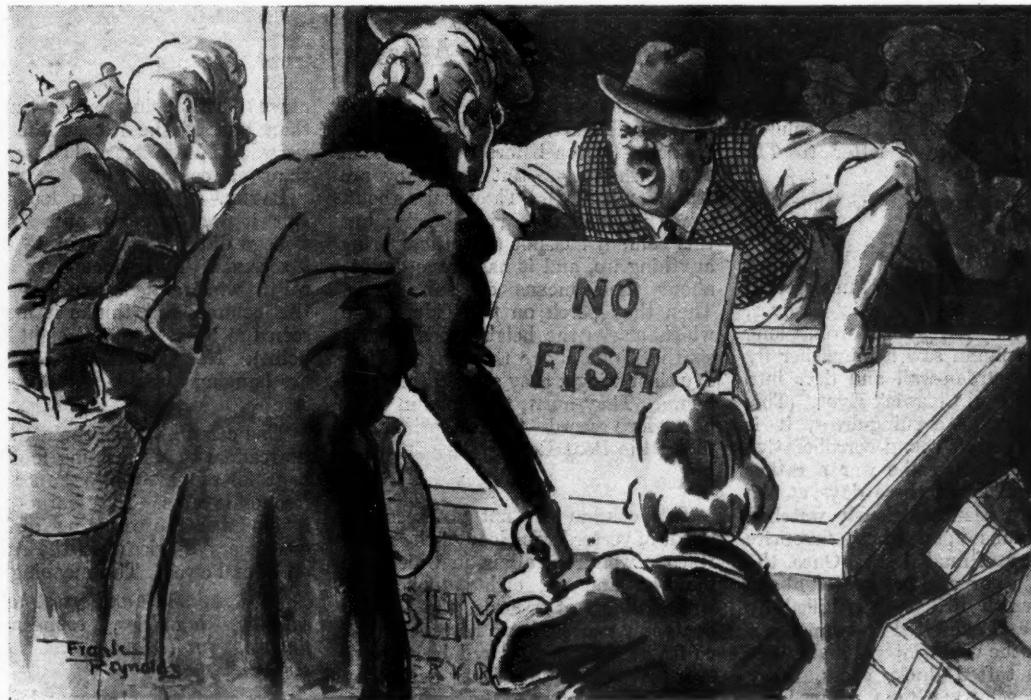
The day's debates were on the Army and Air Force (Annual) Bill and on Forestry. Nothing very exciting

happened and with the aid of a lot of persuasion—that offered by the gentle-voiced Solicitor-General, Sir FRANK SOSKICE, being perhaps the most persuasive persuasion ever heard in the House—both items were disposed of, and everybody seemed quite happy.

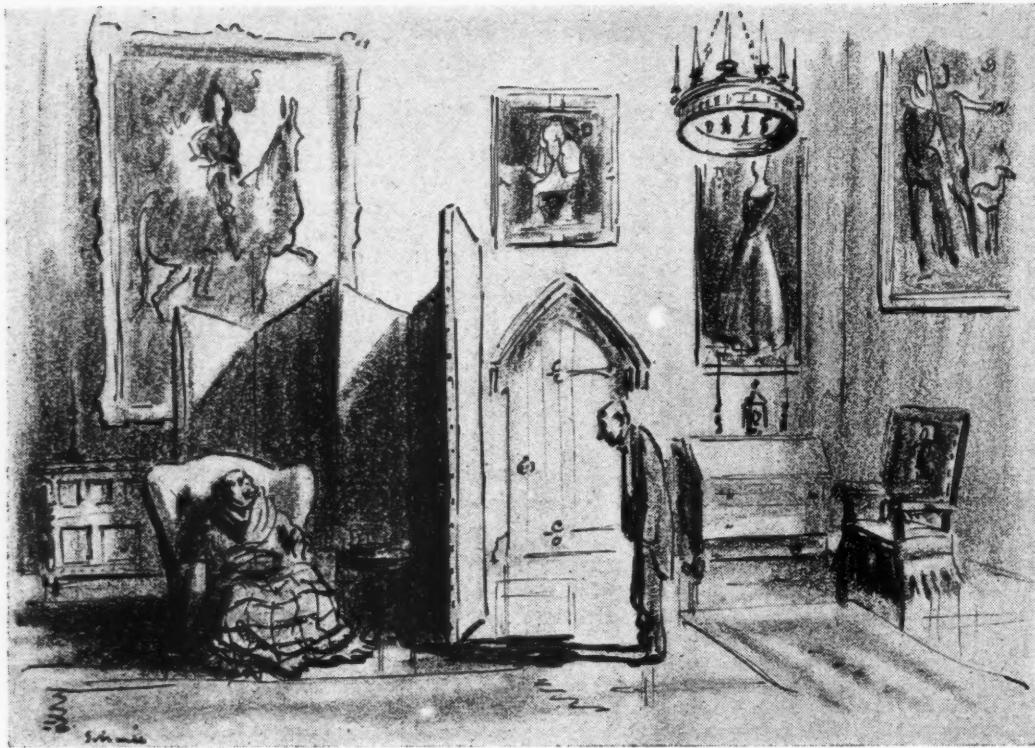
One or two senior N.C.O.s who sat in the Gallery were noticed to turn a little purple when there was talk of using psychologists to deal with "naughty" soldiers, but they kept their thoughts to themselves.

THURSDAY, March 27th.—Mr. NALLY, rising, chastened, in his place, asked the leave of Mr. Speaker to apologize amply for his remark about "bribes." In a stony silence he proceeded to do so, in terms that the most curmudgeonly must have accepted. Mr. NALLY apologized to the Speaker, to the House and to the world at large. And at the end he was given the cheer of forgiveness, as the sinner that repenteth is always given by that generous body.

Then—having been informed by Mr. ARTHUR GREENWOOD that Budget Day is to be April 15th, first day after the coming Easter recess—Members turned their attention to a mixed bag of business. But without notable enthusiasm.



"Madam, for the sake of brevity fish embraces winkles."



"The grey tweeds with the patched elbows and the frayed cuffs, please, Thompson."

The Cosmic Mess

SOME weeks ago, at the peak of the Snow Age, this column nearly wrote a letter to *The Times*, as follows:

"SIR,—To-day we saw the first cormorant.

Hammersmith, W.6."

It was true. Many unexpected creatures have been seen in, or over, these waters. Early one morning, long ago, this column saw a kingfisher fly under the garden-wall and dart into the reeds round Chiswick Eyt. (This column was in evening-dress, it is true, but there is sound corroborative evidence.) During the war a rather anaemic seal spent three days at the end of that island, jealously watched by the swans upon whose favourite promontory of mud it sat. Once, the tale goes, a porpoise penetrated above Hammersmith Bridge, was killed by some ass and exhibited at twopence a peep. In the wild winters hundreds of sea-birds, tufted duck, coots, fancy geese and what-not, take refuge here, and dive, or peck about in the mud, for who knows what. Many sea-gulls,

heaven knows why, are with us all the year round, and do not go for a summer holiday. Never before have we seen two cormorants. But here they are still (March 23rd). They cruise about, heads up, and dive very busily; but this column has not seen them bring anything up, and it has grave doubts about their means of subsistence. Then they perch on the Tide Gauge which marks the height of Hammersmith Bridge above the water. They dry their wings: they sit and think for hours. They must, this column feels, be out for a record—the first cormorants to see the Boat Race.

* * * * *

This column has not yet seen the result of yesterday's Head of the River Race, a wondrous affair, in which one hundred and six eights took part. But, talking of records, the leading boats must surely have travelled past us faster than eight-oared boats have ever travelled before. They flashed by on the ebb, the first of the Spring tides, and a torrent of "land-water", with a fresh wind behind them. Did they

move? This column bets that more than one of them beat the Oxford record of 17 minutes and 58 seconds for the same course.

LATER.—This column lost its bet. But it was not far out: for Jesus College did the course in 18 minutes 9 seconds. And, since they ran into rough wind and water lower down, this column still thinks it may have seen the "fastest-ever" eight (at this point). No wonder the cormorants are hanging about.

* * * * *

This column draws the attention of its readers to a charming footnote on page 33 of the White Paper on the Economic Mess. It is footnote 4: and it explains the meaning of "Other consumers' services" in the Appendix on Man Power. The meaning is:

"Entertainment and sport, hotels and catering, laundries, commerce and finance, professional and personal services."

Any professional man who is surprised to see himself so low down the list may comfort himself with a

parallel passage in Admiral Nares' great book on *Seamanship*:

"Q. What is stowed in the spirit-room?

A. Rum, Medical comforts, Sacramental Wine, and Varnish."

* * * * *

This column was reading with interest an utterance of Disraeli's recorded in *Punch* of July 23rd, 1870. The great statesman was speaking in the Commons on July 11th, just before the Franco-Prussian war began. Among other things he said:

"I hear, sir, superficial remarks made about military surprises, captured capitals, and the brilliance and celerity with which results may be brought about at this moment which are not expected or contemplated. Sir, these are events of a bygone age. In the last century such melodramatic

catastrophes were frequent, and they were effective. But we live in an age animated by a very different spirit. The fate of a great country like France, or a great country like Prussia, cannot be ultimately affected by such results, and the Sovereign who trusts in them will find at the moment of action, wherever he may be placed, that he has to encounter a greater and a more powerful force than any military array, and that is the OUTRAGED OPINION OF AN ENLIGHTENED WORLD. (Cheers.)"

Hitler—and Pearl Harbour—if only we'd known, were quite out of date.

* * * * *

If this column were Mr. X, the celebrated inside-right, it might be feeling a little sore. Born in Yorkshire, Mr. X began his professional career by playing for Buxton, a London team. He was transferred, for a mere £3,000, to a Lancashire

team. Geordieton West bought him for £10,000, and for a month or two he actually played for a part of his native county. But the Cornish Rovers gave £15,000 for him: and now, the gossip is, a London club is ready to risk £20,000 for his services. His legs are as famous as a film-star's. Millions speak of him by his Christian name. Enormous sums depend upon his skill. Yet all the time he is paid no more than a young lady in the chorus. And now the knowing but fickle crowd have begun to "barrack" him, and boo loudly whenever he approaches the ball. A harsh and thankless life. Mr. X., this column feels, deserves what the dockers charmingly describe as "stooping-money." But then, how many of us do!

* * * * *
Dear old "No Victimization!" has been loudly heard again. Try it on the Inland Revenue.
A. P. H.

○ ○

Antique Brass Cannon

THIS is the story about a self-satisfied but philosophic soap-manufacturer named Edward Herringbone who wanted to possess an antique brass cannon.

He was self-satisfied because he was successful and had everything he wanted including:

A charming wife,
An elegant riverside residence with
A classic colonnade,
Green velvet lawns and
A mellowed stone terrace, lapped by
The sparkling waters of
The Thames, upon which there was
A gleaming white flagstaff
but no

Antique brass cannon.

He wanted to possess an antique brass cannon to give the place a distinguished air—like an exclusive yacht club.

He was philosophic because—well you will see . . .

* * * * *

Being a man of action, Mr. Herringbone rang up a large and famous department store, where he had an account, and asked them to send an antique brass cannon to the Herringbone residence forthwith—to which someone in the bowels of the famous department store replied that it would be difficult but, for so valued a customer, it could and would be done. The next day, however, when he returned from the city, his wife said "The Stores (referring of course, to the

famous department store) have sent your books," and, sure enough, in the library he found twelve large volumes entitled:

Some Early English Brass Cannons.

* * * * *
On the telephone perhaps-the-same-someone-as-before in the bowels of the famous department store apologized and promised to rectify the unfortunate error that had occurred—but, the next day, when he got back from the city, his wife said "The Stores have sent the rest of your books," and, sure enough, in the library were twelve more large volumes entitled:

Brass Cannons Throughout the Ages, and, for some obscure reason, every time Mr. Herringbone complained to the Stores that he wished to buy a cannon and not to read about them, another batch of books arrived until, by the end of the month, he possessed

Some Early English Brass Cannons (12 vols.)

Brass Cannons Throughout the Ages (12 vols.)

An Historical Survey of British Brass Cannons (5 vols.)

Antique Brass Cannons I Have Known (18 vols.)

Cannons of Brass—a Novel (1 vol.)

Medieval Spanish Brass Cannons (5 vols.)

A Catalogue of English Brass Cannons (10 vols.)

A Short History of Antique Brass Cannons (25 vols.)

and

Canons, Archdeacons and Bishops I Have Met (6 vols.), and here is the reason why it was said that he was philosophic—it was because he reconciled himself to the fact that the Stores had some peculiar quirk in their make-up which, he believed, would never be eradicated—so he just went out and bought himself a really magnificent brass cannon from an antique shop in the Brompton Road, and had it placed on the

Mellowed stone terrace near the Gleaming white flagstaff

where it looked most distinguished.

* * * * *
Mr. Herringbone took a great pride in his cannon and, for a week, he polished it personally every morning. Then he rang up the Stores and told them to collect their books—saying to himself, somewhat complacently, "Well—all's well that ends well," and that's what he thought—until he came back from the city the next day and found that his cannon had gone. His wife told him that the van from the Stores had called, and the men had said that they had orders to collect an old brass cannon.

* * * * *
Mr. Herringbone has been reading a lot lately and he is now considered to be one of England's foremost authorities on antique brass cannons. He consoles himself with the knowledge that the one he got from the shop in the Brompton Road was, quite definitely, a fake.

At the Play

TAKE a band of gipsies (as the cannibal edition, so long awaited, of Mrs. Beeton might suggest), with a Robeyish ruffian at its head, and set it down picking pockets by the castle of a French nobleman who looks as Tenniel's John Bull would have looked had that eminent Victorian hired out horses in the park. Let the ruffian have a beautiful daughter heaving with anachronistic ambition to ascend the social scale, and the top-booted aristocrat a dashing son less fussy than his dad about blue blood. For romantic flavour and picturesque rivalry throw in one *Great Alvarado*, which may sound like a pear but is really a famous singer. Add a bouquet of irresponsibility in the shape of one professor of deportment and one comic dancing-master. Let the mixture simmer briskly in comfortably sentimental music and be served up vocally on a bright platter garnished plentifully with verse, and you have *Romany Love* at His Majesty's, a musical comedy which verges on operetta and will in all probability please the public taste.

I make that small reservation because it is difficult to say exactly what members of a modern audience expect from this sort of thing. If they want colourful entertainment that is easy on the eyes and ears and liberally sprinkled with light conventional humours, but no more, then here it is. If, however, they feel that lyrics are sufficiently important for the production to be so devised that every word is heard, then they will be disappointed. To me the distinction seems vital. Half the pleasure of Gilbert and Sullivan lay in the fact that the D'Oyley Carte Company treated their lyrics with such tender care that not a line was blurred. As a result, whether you left the Savoy grumbling or ecstatic, your head was ringing with Gilbert as well as with Sullivan. To-day the public, in spite of the stentorously clear speaking of the cinema, is less critical than it used to be of the way in which words are sung.

I came away from this feeling it didn't do itself justice and was very likely better than it appeared. The gipsies and the dancers and the chateau-bottled equestrians are gay and the story is a convenient frame for an operettish plot. Mr. VICTOR HERBERT's music is pleasant and the lyrics, by "WRIGHT and GEORGE FORREST" (is it Mr. WRIGHT or are they brothers?), worth hearing so far as one could judge from the few that could be made out; but there is too much singing, apparently for the sake of the tune, of words which may be excellent but

professor, and Mr. EDDIE KELLAND ESPINOSA, his assistant, combine competently to do the honours of a romantic no-man's-land.

Sir BARRY JACKSON's hard-working young company at the Birmingham Repertory have been giving a most intelligent performance of *The Silent Woman*, under Mr. WILLARD STOKER's direction. It is far from the best of BEN JONSON, but it has been operated on discreetly to provide a hilarious evening, at the end of which one's vocabulary was so richly fertilized that care was

needed even in ordering early morning tea. The silent woman, you may not remember, is palmed off in marriage by unfeeling gallants on a veteran to whom so much as a whisper is purgatory (did John Leech, whose private hell was the barrel-organ, know about this play?); and she turns out of course to be neither silent nor a woman. Mr. STOKER did not repeat Garrick's curious mistake, which angered London in 1776, of using a girl in the part. He linked the play with the present by the delightful touch of getting up the servant, *Mule*, as the spit and image of Harpo Marx, and introduced some very ingenious business into the famous scene with the lawyer. Such changes as were necessary in Mr. PAUL SHELVING's admirably simplified sets were made at the double by serfs in golden masks, a manœuvre which keeps interest undimmed and should be used more often. I thought the

old gentleman might with advantage have been rather more unlikeable. The large cast spoke well, acted with spirit and did justice to JONSON's bolder strokes in phrase and character. I should have liked to mention more than Miss MABEL FRANCE and Messieurs JOHN PHILLIPS, ROY MALCOLM, EDWARD HORTON, JOHN PAUL and PAUL EDDINGTON. This attractive little theatre, deservedly crammed, is now putting on plays for runs of three or four weeks. WILDE's *An Ideal Husband* follows at the beginning of April.

Two other reps were on my list, but a lot of water got in the way and at the last moment Mr. Punch's staff-punt was found to have sprung a leak. ERIC.



TAKING UP HIS TIME

Boris	MR. MELVILLE COOPER
Musetta	MISS HELENA BLISS
Baron Pettibois	MR. HENRY HEWITT

which, even for the third row of the stalls, might as well be proclaiming the virtues of Dutch cheese. The orchestra, good but too enthusiastic, is partly to blame. Some of the soloists win through and some do not; diction is the weak point of Mr. WILLIAM MOLLISON's otherwise satisfactory production.

Funny? No more than medium. Sets and dresses (by many different hands) are fair, rising to good in a charming scene in a theatrical academy. There is some sprightly dancing. And a large team led by Mr. MELVILLE COOPER, gipsy generalissimo, Miss HELENA BLISS, his daughter, Mr. JOHN TYERS, *The Great Alvarado*, Mr. HUMPHREY KENT, Duke, Mr. ERIC STARLING, his son, Mr. HENRY HEWITT,

At the Opera and Ballet

THE MAGIC FLUTE (COVENT GARDEN)

THE SHEPHERDS OF THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS (SADLER'S WELLS)

LA FÊTE ÉTRANGE (SADLER'S WELLS)

MOZART's opera *The Magic Flute* lends itself to lavish production, and at Covent Garden it has certainly received it in full measure. To the queer mixture of fairy-tale, pantomime and philosophy held together with matchless music have been added elaborate scenery, fantastical costumes and stage effects that at times suggest the circus. *Papageno* the bird-catcher (GRAHAM CLIFFORD), a simple child of nature who lives for the joys of the moment, is transformed into a comic Irishman who shouts instead of singing (as comics for some reason always do), and the *Queen of the Night* (AUDREY BOWMAN) is condemned to sing her first aria teed up on a dizzy eminence away at the back of the stage. A long drive is needed for her to reach the footlights and a couple of approach shots for the back of the stalls, so it is small wonder that she slices some of her coloratura shots instead of holing out in one. The famous and fabulously difficult vengeance aria she sings at closer quarters, but it is not on *Sarastro* but on MALCOLM BAKER-SMITH, the producer, that vengeance should be called down.

Nor should OLIVER MESSEL, the designer, be allowed to escape scot-free. The *Queen of the Night*'s costume, a veritable mountain of spangles, would take the shine out of any singer's coloratura, and nearly all the principals labour under similar handicaps. KENNETH NEATE, in addition to the ordeals he must undergo in the story, has to wear a golden helmet shaped like an inverted lily of the valley. His voice is not large, but his *Tamino* is very pleasing. *Sarastro* is garbed in purple, crimson and gold and makes a spectacular entry in a chariot drawn by winged lions. Even so fine a bass-baritone as OSCAR NATZKA's is overpowered by all this gorgeousness and seems to lose its natural power and resonance. But it is VICTORIA SLADEN as *Pamina* who comes off worst. She must look by turns dignified, tragic, heroic, noble and worthy of a crown of wisdom—all in a crinoline artfully looped up in front to display bright-coloured pantaloons underneath. Her performance almost enables one to forget her costume—which is to say that it is very good indeed. There is some good singing also from the *Three Ladies*—DORIS DOREE, ELISABETH



"We'll have THAT one."

ABERCROMBIE and CONSTANCE SHACKLOCK. KARL RANKL conducts.

There is a Chinese proverb which says "You should rule a great kingdom as you would cook a little fish—don't overdo it." This production is badly overdone, though there is a ferocious striped serpent in the first act who folds himself up and dies as tidily and endearingly in his corner as any pussy-cat curling up to go to sleep. He is a great success.

The production by WILLIAM CHAPPELL at Sadler's Wells of VAUGHAN WILLIAMS's one-act pastoral *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* is a conspicuous example of the virtue of restraint. This beautiful and dignified work is founded on an episode from *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Mr. CHAPPELL's apocalyptic setting has just the right feeling and he has produced it with

the greatest simplicity so that the words and music speak for themselves. The whole effect is moving and sincere.

ANDREE HOWARD's ballet *La Fête Étrange* has been revived at Sadler's Wells. The music is taken from the piano works and songs of GABRIEL FAURÉ, and the story is of a country boy who becomes infatuated with the bride-to-be of a nobleman and in all innocence destroys her romance. This ballet, in spite of some good moments and charming costumes and setting by SOPHIE FEDOROVITCH, is rather monotonous. Perhaps this is partly because FAURÉ's music, for all its romantic lyricism, is static and does not lend itself to the dance, but the ensembles are not strong or clear and the *Bride* does not emerge as a character.

D. C. B.



"So sorry, but we've been transferred to day shifts."

Our Booking Office (By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

A Diplomat's Memoirs

BOTH the title and the contents of *Silken Dalliance* (CONSTABLE, 12/6) are calculated to jar on the sterner spirits of to-day; but to many readers this picture of a privileged world concerned only with itself will afford a welcome escape from the global musings by which most people seem at present to be preoccupied. During his early years Mr. H. J. BRUCE, when not at school, spent most of his time either at his maternal grandfather's place near Guildford, or with his paternal grandparents at Downhill in Northern Ireland, "a sombre grey granite mass, perched on an Atlantic cliff with nothing but the distant Scotch isle of Jura between it and the North Pole." His tyrannical Ulster grandfather disseminated a good deal of gloom, but Downhill itself and the surrounding country were fascinatingly beautiful, and are delightfully evoked by the author. From Eton, where he rowed in the eight, Mr. BRUCE went into the Diplomatic Service. Vienna was his first foreign post, and there he spent some very pleasant years. In the light of subsequent events, he says, an eye on the look-out for trouble might have detected some signs of the powder-trail. Such an eye Mr. BRUCE does not claim to have possessed, but what he did see he describes well: for example, a helmeted German Emperor stalking slowly into the Court ballroom to the melting strains of Gounod's "Ave Maria." After Berlin, St. Petersburg, and the new world inaugurated by the author's escape with wife and child from the Bolsheviks.

H. K.

"Runnelow"

Ranelagh, pronounced in its time as above, catered at Chelsea for the entertainment of London between 1742 and 1805. It was the Butlin camp of a politer day, just as the rotting heads of the Jacobites on Temple Bar were the contemporary Nuremberg. It was also the mainstay of English song against Italian opera and *bel canto*; and if, fired by MOLLIE SANDS' delightful *Invitation to Ranelagh* (WESTHOUSE, 12/6), you turn up the serried folios of Baring-Gould's *English Minstrelsie* you will discover how many old airs survived in the works of Ranelagh composers. The famous pleasure-gardens exhibited a comprehensive national patriotism and a total absence of class hatred. Everyone could come in who could pay and behave, from George II, *incognito* in a special red box, to the smallest London 'prentice. The author describes the décor—which was Venetian, Chinese or both; the balls, the fireworks, the masquerades, the river fêtes—but, above all, the music and the musicians. Her absorbing biographies of musical families and of infant prodigies—ranging from Mozart who accompanied Queen Charlotte at eight to Miss Randles who impressed Dr. Burney at three and a half—go to show how much heredity and environment foster genius and technique and how signally we stand to lose by the present passion for "equality."

H. P. E.

An American on the Scots

In *The Scot in History* (CAPE, 16/-) Mr. WALLACE NOTESTEIN, an American professor of Lowland Scottish descent on the mother's side, has attempted, with an attractive mixture of courage and modesty, to describe the character of the Scots as revealed in their history. He does not claim to have more than an amateur's knowledge of Scottish history, and expresses his regret that he is totally unacquainted with modern psychology, a grasp of which would, he believes, have been useful. It might have proved boring, and Mr. NOTESTEIN is thoroughly readable. The book is in three parts. In the first the author pictures the barren savage Scotland of the Middle Ages, when the French knights who came over to fight the English said that they had never previously known what was meant by poverty and hard-living. In the second part Mr. NOTESTEIN deals with the Reformation, which had a far more fanatical character in Scotland than in England, and imposed a standard of conduct on the people for which their previous way of life had in no way prepared them. The movement away from Calvinism occupies much of the third part; represented in literature by the song-writers Allan Ramsay, Fergusson and, above all, Robert Burns; in economics by Adam Smith, in invention by James Watt, and in philosophy by Hume. Then came Sir Walter Scott, who made the whole world conscious of Scotland, with effects, some good, some harmful, which the author traces in his concluding chapters.

H. K.

Revolt on the Mission-Field

With the exception of H. G. Wells, whose passions and prejudices intervened to make him less scientific than he thought he was, the man of science is not, as a rule, well-equipped to turn novelist. Women of science are, if anything, worse off. In so far as Miss LETTIE ROGERS is a sociologist she is hardly a novelist at all; though as an American missionary's daughter, reared in China, she obviously knows her way about the background of *South of Heaven* (COLLINS, 8/6). This started as a short story and grew into a novel. It tells how Judith Ward, daughter of

a zealous minister and his disgruntled wife, took to China like a duckling to water, preferring—as what child would not?—the poetry of traditional native life to the unappetizing Christianity of her father and her mother's ineffectual efforts to preserve American standards of living. She had just got as far as burning a little surreptitious incense to Buddha and attracting the notice of a gallant young doctor—half-Chinese, half-American—when the war broke out. Faced with the cowardice of going and the horror of staying, the parents make characteristic choices; and the resultant action is the most promising part of a book whose sinews of thought and action undeniably need stiffening. H. P. E.

Our Bird Book

Although Mr. SIDNEY ROGERSON wrote *Our Bird Book* for his little daughter Jane, one feels that, despite such artless ruses as describing the robin as "a small, perky person with a fat red tummy," he was, from the beginning, aware that the book would inevitably fall into the hands of what G. K. C. calls "that monster, the schoolboy," for with gentle, unobtrusive persistence he pleads with his readers to protect and love birds; and this he does by writing of gold-crest or greedy turtle-dove, of "the common Cockney sparrow" as of the dawn chorus of all the birds with such persuasive love and simplicity that—one hopes—he may win converts to his creed even among those to whom a bird's nest is what a Spanish treasure-ship was to an Elizabethan privateer. This special pleading is the more effective because the book does exactly what it sets out to do by telling children nearly everything they want to know about all our common and most of our uncommon birds, both native and visitant, their appearance, habitats, nests, eggs, and—endearingly—their characteristics, not to say characters. Their division into families is explained in the most broadly sweeping fashion, and the cycles of migration and emigration expounded in a manner which children can easily understand. The thirty-two colour plates and many black-and-white illustrations of CHARLES TUNNICLIFFE will equally enchant all right-minded children—which is to say, ninety-nine per cent. of them, *pace* the child-psychologists. How Messrs. COLLINS contrive to put this handsome quarto volume on the present-day market at 21/- is a mystery one can only penetrate by assuming that, very reasonably, they expect the work to be a standard favourite for at least the next ten years. R. C. S.

Things That Go Bump.

Charlotte Riddell was born in Antrim nine years before Mr. Punch's arrival, and through a long life turned out novels and short stories to the tune of over fifty books. One who had never heard of her is grateful to Mr. HERBERT VAN THAL for collecting, with a foreword, six of her tales under the title *Weird Stories* (HOME AND VAN THAL, 8/6). They are very good. Apart from necessary differences in background (such as a prosperous hansom-cab proprietor) and from the refreshing absence of the word "psychic," they scarcely date. In their quiet clearing of the ground, their exactness of plan and their calculated deferment of the first moment of horror they suggest Henry James. Mrs. Riddell was free from her period's passion for words as words; she chose them with scrupulous care and expended them thrifitly. Four of these stories have to do with old houses, whose sinister atmosphere of creaking and decay is set in a few lines. One cannot say which is the best, but "The Open Door" would take some beating. It describes how a London clerk, staying alone in a deserted mansion

in the country, probes into the mystery of a great door which flies open by itself. As a hair-raiser it is powerful, as a piece of writing admirable. Mrs. Riddell's horrific imagination did not prevent her from observing the facts of human oddity, in which her times were richer than ours. Connoisseurs of literary shivers should look out for this book, and it is to be hoped that, having opened up so good a vein, Mr. VAN THAL will work it further. E. O. D. K.

Cold Adventure

Mr. J. M. SCOTT in *The Pole of Inaccessibility* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 8/6), which is the latest of his Arctic Circle novels, gives us a rich mixture of adventure with dashes of irony, humour, possibilities, improbabilities and exuberant romanticism. He begins with the return from Arctic exploration of a hero (Geoffrey Troy) in search of a newspaper that will finance further adventuring on "the greatest sledge journey of all time" in search of the Pole of Inaccessibility in the Arctic Circle. He has no luck there, but he does meet an ex-carpet-manufacturer and his wife, who yearn for adventure, and ask him to fly with them so that they may drop a carpet (woven in Union Jack design) over the spot. He refuses because he wants to do more than "sit in a seaplane, and see a lot of ice and feel very cold," but when the Flying Carpeters (having hired a pilot and set out) are reported missing, he and a friend fly out to rescue them. Other friends follow to rescue him. Indeed, there is a lot of rescuing by the unrescued and a great deal of hampering by an Esquimo, who has a passion for drinking petrol from aeroplanes and leaving the taps running. Farcical though all this sounds, it is written with most convincing solemnity; and the account of the finding of the ice-bound ships with their crews preserved has real beauty. It all makes excellent reading and could be a grand film.

B. E. B.

"Muscular Christianity"

Mr. GUY KENDALL's *Charles Kingsley and His Ideas* (HUTCHINSON, 21/-) is a good and scholarly contribution towards the understanding of a fine character who was, in his earlier days, frequently misunderstood. Indeed, Kingsley could never be accused of a tame consistency. The "Parson Lot" of younger days—"I am a Church of England parson—and a Chartist"—who helped F. D. Maurice to start *Politics for the People*, manifested in later years an increasing respect for the aristocracy. He was full of a self-assertive pugnacity combined with a real humility, he was scientist and mystic, he could be the life and soul of the rectory table at Eversley and yet apt to burst into tears on what most would think insufficient provocation. In many respects he was in advance of his time, notably in his zeal for better sanitation, better dwellings for the labourer, better education for all, especially for girls. As Andrew Lang wrote in one of his essays, he was for ever sounding his "chivalrous and cheery horn" to urge on the reformer. Perhaps in his writings he may have "pointed the moral" a little too much. But what zest there was in everything he wrote, poetry as well as prose! He had to write, not only because he had so much to say but because he had a family to bring up on a very exiguous income. Eversley was worth a bare four hundred a year; so it had to be literature or pupils. He tried both, and with equal energy. Mr. KENDALL thinks *Alton Locke* his best work. He thought himself that he felt a different being when he got into metre—and perhaps some of his verse will outlive his novels.

L. W.



"I think you're silly not to ask him for a rise—after all, there's no one else in the office who understands his fire."

Back at the Wheel

VI—Hating It

LAST Saturday I achieved an ambition. I did the shopping by car. It is a very special kind of motoring pleasure, this, gliding from butcher to greengrocer, from baker to dairyman, throwing the joint and two veg. in the back and gliding easily on.

I enjoyed the butcher very much, even if his smile was a little broader than mere commercial diplomacy demanded, but as I was gliding easily up to the greengrocer's something disconcerting happened. The engine stopped just before I switched off—only a split second before, but before. I was certain of it. I am developing a sensitiveness about the Good Goer which amounts to the psychic.

"Shoppin' by motor, eh?" said the greengrocer. Ordinarily I should have been pleased, but my heart was filled with foreboding. "What's appearances," he said, palming me a two-and-ninepenny cauliflower, "as long as she goes, eh?"

I hoped he would abandon the subject, but he came out on to the pavement, interested, and waved goodbye to me as I got into the seat. *Wrr-wrr-thup*, went the starter, with an insolent finality about the *thup*. I sat for a moment, thinking.

"Bit awkward," said the greengrocer with relish.

I was glad that I had had the presence of mind not to return his farewell, and I offered no comment now, but got out with the starting-handle.

"Goin' to give her a bit of a wind?" he asked.

Two boys with bad colds and Airborne berets eagerly sacrificed their priority in the vegetable queue and came to lean on the bonnet, arguing shrilly about whether or not my car was older than the pair of them put together. A lady in blue serge with an evangelistic cast of features and a well-defined corset-line began: "If mankind 'ad been intended to move

about the face of the earth on wheels . . ." but I drowned her with the clash of steel on steel.

After twenty winds I recovered my hat from the traffic for the second time and put the starting-handle away. But for the interest shown by the greengrocer, his queue, the two boys and the passengers in four specially-haltered perambulators I might have tried a repair-method of my own invention, which consists of sitting in the refractory car and smoking a cigarette. Then, just when she thinks I have given up hope, I step suddenly on the starter and she roars into astonished life. To-day I didn't feel that I could risk this; the system is not entirely infallible.

"Like me to give her a bit of a wind?" asked the greengrocer.

I muttered what he may have taken for thanks and began to make my way towards the garage at the cross-roads, where a competent-looking garage-hand whom I had mentally placed on

file on my outward journey was washing down a taxi.

Nervousness of garage-hands led me at one time to prepare long and complicated speeches, couched in respectful and semi-humorous terms and designed to put them in possession of all the facts at the outset. Now I know that simplicity is the key.

"My car won't go," I said, and gave that snigger that will creep in at these times.

He moved his eyebrows to show that he had heard me, but only slopped a wash-leather full of water down the taxi's back. The ice broken, I continued: "I was wondering whether you could possibly have a look at it?" I added ingratiatingly that he would probably be able to put his finger on the trouble in a trice. He heard me out politely. Then:

"Can't leave me pumps."

"Quite so," I said. "But can't you send one of your men?"

He dropped the wash-leather in the bucket and began to walk across to a glass office. He threw over his shoulder, "All alone. Saturday, see?" and went in, banging the door slightly.

I waited hopefully, but the interview was over.

It was Saturday farther up the street, too, where a man with small features closely gathered into the centre of a round face, giving him the appearance of a painted balloon, couldn't leave his pumps either, though he said that he would examine the car if I brought it along. I think I gave him rather a telling look on that. A youth in a windowful of motor-cycles couldn't leave the motorcycles (Saturday) and two collarless men in a junk shop with an outboard engine displayed on the pavement said that if it had been a wireless set it would have been different.

The man with a battery-charging plant under one of the railway arches undertook to charge the battery for me by Wednesday.

*When I had got some coppers from a newsagent (whose son-in-law would have been just the chap, only unfortunately he was in the Orkneys) I began telephoning.

"Twenty-four-hour Service" rang off before I'd told them where the car was. So did "The Car Doctor." The official spokesman of "Motor Tailors" stayed long enough to remind me that it was Saturday, and an obliging wrong number put me on to a reliable firm at Ealing Common. This turned out to be "The Car Doctor" again, who was really rude this time. "Day and Night Repairs" would have towed me in, but the break-down van

had broken down. But if I could run the car into "Whibbleston's Repairs" in the Goldhawk Road . . .

Desperate, I walked back to the flats, and there found an angel masquerading as Bidgley, of garage No. 7. His bald head stuck out from under the back of his car and had a rough map of Australia done on it in oil.

I opened the conversation with a misleading snigger; he took this as genuine amusement over my troubles, and capped the story spiritedly with an account of a similar experience of his own in the Grampians. I laughed, but quickly asked him how he had got out of it.

"Well," he said, dragging himself out on his stomach and going serious at once—"I took out the collar-filter, naturally and restabilized the booma."

"And that did it?"

"Not immediately. The forcing-pin smicket had to be flooded for tensile compression." (He had a small spanner in his mouth, and I may not be reporting with absolute accuracy.) "You tried that of course?"

"No."

"Are you sure the lugs aren't cogging?"

The time had come to be frank.

"Bidgley," I said. "I am an indifferent mechanic. It will be dark in an hour. The battery's down . . . the police . . ."

"Steady," said Bidgley, sensing my mounting hysteria. He tugged at his lower lip. "Look," he said presently, "I rather wanted to get my barrel-nuggets aligned this afternoon—but they can wait." He patted my arm. "I'll come along."

I took his hand and shook it.

The walk began well, but deteriorated when Bidgley found that I scarcely knew a forcing-pin smicket from a side-feed drench. He began to strip my soul as bare as a willow-sprig, and after reeling under my admission that I had never greased the Good Goer's flounder-swivels since I bought her he fell into a scornful and disapproving silence. As for me, my embarrassment welled steadily, and was lapping the high-water mark as we rounded the greengrocer's corner. Eventually, as I faltered in my stride and then stopped dead, it overflowed its banks.

The Good Goer was going. I saw the tremble of the driving-mirror, the over-all mistiness of outline that spoke of restoration to pulsing life.

"I thought I'd just give her a bit of a wind," the greengrocer explained, and stood beside his neglected queue, waiting for my thanks.

They were not as warm as they should have been, perhaps, but I was thinking of Bidgley. And he, it was clear from the set of his retreating shoulders, was thinking of me.

(To be humiliated) J.B.B.



Cauld Day in March

ICREPT northwards up the steep High Street, sometimes putting my best foot foremost and sometimes the other one, but as often as not putting them backwards instead, for I could never tell exactly which way they would go, and I was wrapped in so many layers of clothing that I seldom knew which way I was pointing. Even the natives had noted the arctic conditions. "Cauld day," they said; and when the natives say cauld they mean cold.

Away in the distance I saw Mr. Cameron emerge, flaunting his shirt-sleeves in the face of Providence, and pour a kettle of hot water down a little hole in the middle of the street. Gradually I attained his latitude and entered his shop.

"Cold day!" I greeted him.

"Och, this is nothing. We've had only the foretaste of it yet."

"Thirty degrees of frost last night, anyway."

"And who'd mind a few degrees? It's true Hamish Ferguson went to buy some gloves this forenoon." Mr. Cameron rocked with Highland mirth. "It'd have to be cauld afore I'd do the like o' that."

"Your heart's not in the right place, Mr. Cameron. Anyway, what about my electric fire? Has that element come through yet?"

"It has no."

"You were expecting it by the morning train, you know."

"Aye. Well, the train's not expected itself for an hour or two. But th' element'll no be on it anyway. I hear it'll may be two or three weeks

yet. Th' English are keeping all the elements for themselves just now."

"Snow holding up the train?"

"Och, they've had just a shovelful in the south. But it's worse the other way, I'm told. Last night's train to London'll be nineteen hours late if it gets here soon."

At this point the kettle on the gas-ring boiled over. Mr. Cameron strode out and poured the water down the little hole, which he carefully closed again. I waited while he promised one customer a battery by the end of May and another a wireless valve before midsummer. Then I made another attempt.

"I can't stay in bed for the next two or three weeks," I complained. "Would it be dangerous if I threaded the old element together by hand?"

"Not a bit. Aye, do that. There's no reason to be scared o' th' electric, especially with all these cuts. Of course, if you held th' element together with your hand and then switched on you *might* get a bit warm. But it'd never hurt ye."

"I don't know whether I dare risk it."

"Och, ye're nothing but a babby," said Mr. Cameron, who does not mince his words.

"No. A man can take reasonable care of himself and still be a man for a' that, Mr. Cameron." He was reduced to emotional silence by this echo of the national poet. "An' a' that, as far as that goes," I added with dignity.

Every moment brought more evidence of the depth of the temperature. The very children were fully clad, and

one toddler even wore an overcoat on his sledge; a group of German prisoners crossed the road, examined the thermometer outside Mr. Cameron's shop with puzzled eyes and went away crying unashamedly.

"I went up the Ben on skis yesterday," I said proudly.

"Och, ye did so? Didn't ye half-kill yourself up there three or four years ago? But there'll be no depth of snow to speak of?"

"Oh, no. Three or four feet as a rule, and drifts up to ten or twelve. I went right under once when I took the skis off."

"A snow-bath'd do ye no harm. Very good for the rheumatism, they say."

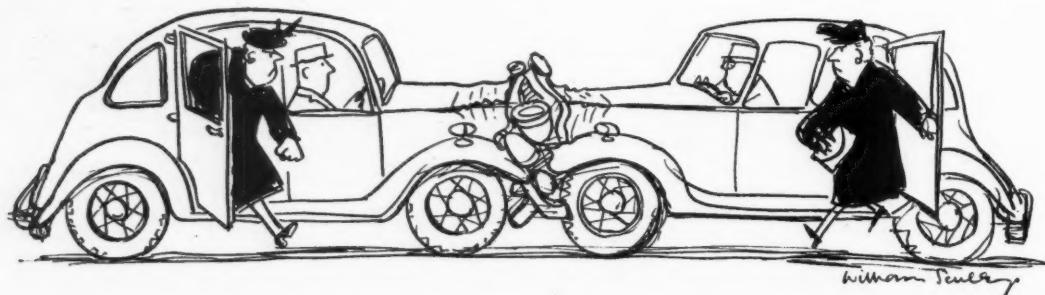
"Must be. On the way down I went right through the ice at the outflow of the loch—trying to get a drink. Up to my knees, skis and all. Good for chilblains, I believe."

Mr. Cameron smiled tolerantly. "I mind," he said, "the last time the river froze over. We took a bottle or two down there, cut a hole through and jumped in one after another. It was nothing, of course, though Georgie Fraser never really got over it. He died just the week later."

This finished my small talk. "Well, you'll try again for that element, Mr. Cameron?"

"I'll try. But you'll no be needing it till the weather's bad. I'd never let a few degrees put *me* out."

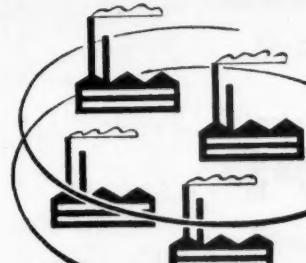
He followed me outside and once more emptied his kettle down the little hole in the middle of the ice-bound street.



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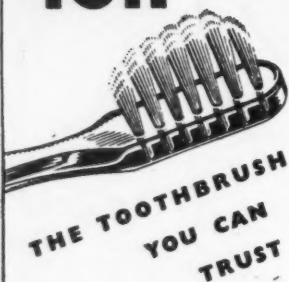
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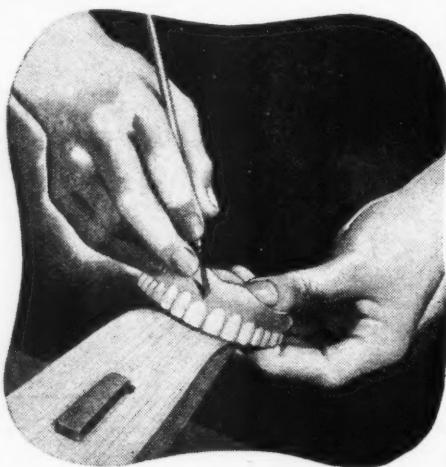
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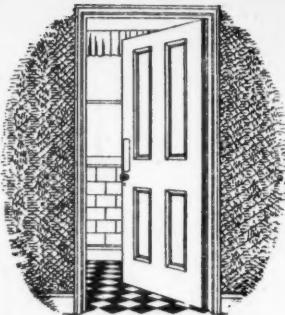
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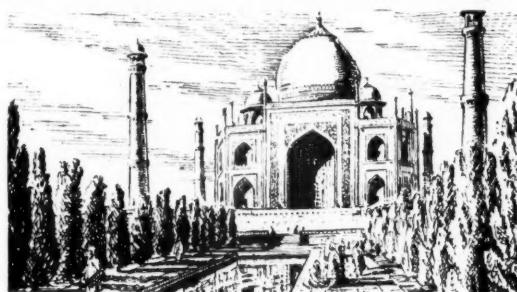
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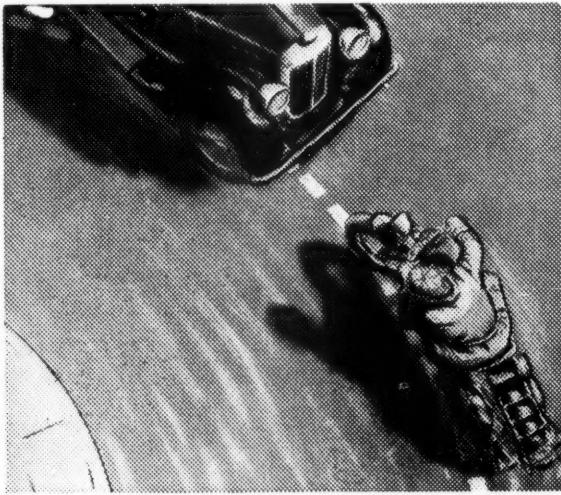
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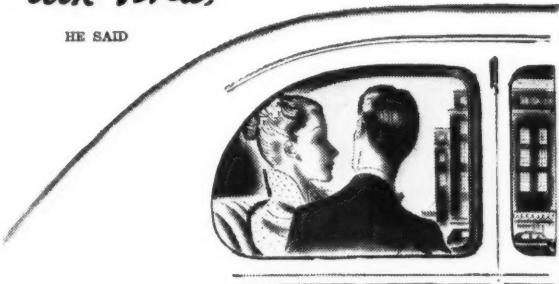
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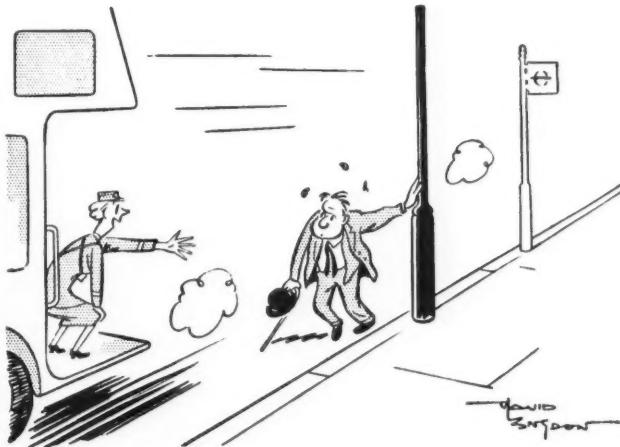
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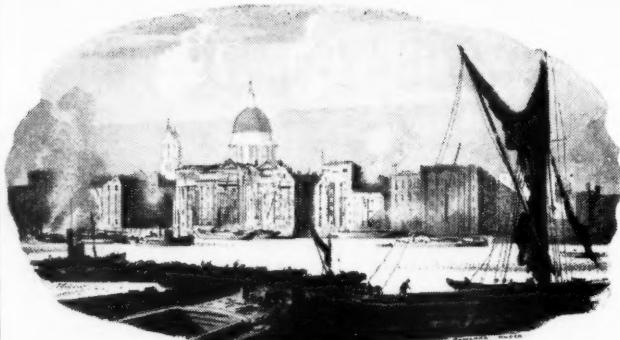
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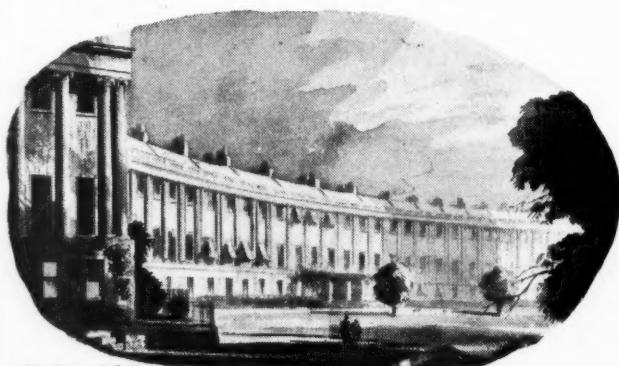
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